

**DONOR DOLLARS, INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR, AND DEMOCRATIC
DEVELOPMENT: A DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE THEORY**

by

ESTHER MARIE SKELLEY

(Under the Direction of Howard J. Wiarda)

ABSTRACT

Democracy assistance to the developing world has increased exponentially in recent decades, yet it remains to be determined whether such assistance has caused democratic development in recipient states. This is in part because no one has developed a causal theory that explains how exactly democracy assistance donors expect to yield positive democratic development. This study does just that. It develops a theory to explain the behavior of democracy assistance providers. It then tests the fit of the theory with case studies of USAID civil society assistance programs in Haiti and the Dominican Republic in the 1990s and 2000s. The study finds that the proposed theory accurately reflects the operating practices of democracy assistance providers and lays the foundation for future tests of democracy assistance impact.

The theory is based on Most and Starr's (1993) pre-theoretic framework of opportunity and willingness, and on the evaluation practices of the U.S. democracy assistance community. In brief, the theory asserts that democracy assistance providers seek to directly improve individual,

and subsequently, organizational capabilities (opportunity) within a recipient state and indirectly to increase the willingness of citizens of the recipient state to engage in activities that are expected to yield democratic development. As individuals become more capable and willing to pursue pro-democratic change in civil society, political parties, or elected office, they will engage in such behavior; further, such behavior will over time increase their opportunities to engage in more pro-democracy behavior by changing institutions, laws, and norms.

INDEX WORDS: democracy, democracy assistance, democracy promotion, foreign assistance, USAID, National Endowment for Democracy, State Department, evaluation, impact analysis, foreign aid, foreign assistance, Haiti, Dominican Republic

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*For Doug and my parents,
Thank you for your unwavering support and encouragement.*

PREFACE

Democracy assistance is an activity that is commonly misperceived. Its activities are often associated, by academics and the general public alike, with the imposition of democracy by force or the covert subversion of foreign leaders deemed unfriendly to the national interests of the United States. Granted, the United States has engaged in such militarized and covert interventions many times. However, the vast majority of current democracy assistance activities is more subtle and is provided to citizens of countries who seek help with democratic reform.

The idea for this project emerged during my second year of graduate school at the University of Georgia. The year was 2004 and the democracy promotion rhetoric of the George W. Bush administration was on the rise. The United States appeared to be losing the war in Iraq and Natan Sharansky's notion of the path to freedom and the end of tyranny was cited as a post-hoc justification for the invasion of Iraq. Democracy assistance spending was increased exponentially, not only in Iraq, but throughout the world.

That same year, Howard Wiarda asked me to help him write an election report for the Center for Strategic and International Studies on the 2004 Dominican Republic elections. During that trip, we met with the USAID mission leader and program staff, U.S. embassy officials including the Ambassador, and members of various civil society groups including *Participación Ciudadana* and members of the Democratic Initiatives Project. We observed meetings between members of the election board and civil society groups. We talked to international election observers from the Carter Center, the Organization of American States, and

others. We even met then candidate and winner of the election, President Leonel Fernández. We were there to observe the observers of the election, but we accomplished so much more. Namely, we witnessed firsthand the intersection of U.S. diplomats, international observers from throughout the world, local election observers, political party leaders, the Dominican media, the Catholic Archbishop, civil society leaders and the presidential candidates themselves. The peaceful election following a series of political and economic crises was a turning point for the Dominican Republic in its 50-year path to democracy. The masses took to the streets to celebrate its outcome, and I joined them.

I left thinking that democracy promotion could bring about positive change. Sure, everyone had different motivations for being there, some to help and some for self-interest. But somehow, it worked. Howard Wiarda was not so optimistic regarding what he viewed as foreign attempts to export democracy and meddle in the affairs of Dominicans – sometimes for better and sometimes for worse.

After that trip, I initially developed an idealistic research agenda aimed at showing that democracy assistance makes an important and positive contribution to the world. The first step in that agenda was to determine what exactly the promotion of democracy was expected to accomplish. To that end, my masters thesis compared the assumptions that American presidents since the 1980s have made about the spread of democracy and the findings of the political science literature. Contrary to my expectations, the literature supported almost none of the assumptions. The spread of democracy actually has increased conflict, human rights violations, and economic instability as states move from authoritarian to semi-democratic regimes en route, at least hopefully, to democracy.

However, I still gave democracy assistance the benefit of the doubt. I believed that the democracy assistance community in Washington knew something that the academics were missing. After all, why would the people who implement assistance programs in distant lands sacrifice so much if they were not seeing positive results? Fortunately Georges Fauriol, then at the International Republic Institute (IRI), hired me to help him with strategic planning and evaluation. As one of the National Endowment for Democracy's core institutes, IRI is at the center of U.S. democracy assistance efforts. The experience was invaluable and I learned so much from working alongside seasoned veterans of the democracy assistance community.

I worked for IRI for one year, from 2006 to 2007. During that time I participated in countless meetings of IRI staff seeking to learn lessons from their successes and failures; USAID meetings led by Margaret Sarles regarding USAID's ongoing impact analysis and evaluation improvement endeavors; grant proposal review sessions led by Barbara Haig at the National Endowment for Democracy; and metrics development meetings at the United States Institute for Peace led by Mike Dziedzic, Barbara Sotirin, and Col. John Agolia as part of their Measuring Progress in Conflict Environments project (2008).

Through my one year as a participant observer in the U.S. democracy community, I realized that each person who provides assistance has competing agendas. On the one hand, each wants to demonstrate that her assistance efforts are effective, and her job or budget is justified. On the other hand, each wants to learn from her mistakes and change so that she can make a positive difference in the communities that they assist. This is reflected in the evaluation practices of the democracy community. Evaluation efforts are inconsistent, as some are mere budget justifications with little to no real critical insight, while others are genuine attempts to examine positive and negative contributions to aid recipients. Unfortunately, even the latter

group, despite great intentions and many iterations of reform, has not produced evaluation requirements that provide credible assessments of the relationship between democracy assistance and development.

I left Washington to teach at the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), determined to figure out why this is so. I initially proposed in my dissertation prospectus to examine the politics of democracy assistance evaluation and decisionmaking, but soon found that Gerald Hyman, director of the USAID Office of Democracy and Governance from 2002 to 2007, beat me to it. (2008) His senior level insider's account of U.S. foreign assistance reform efforts under Secretary of State Rice is a superb analysis of the intersection between foreign assistance evaluation and politics.

Meanwhile, as an instructor at Georgia Tech since 2007, I have had the honor to teach empirical research methods, international relations theory, and American foreign policy to some of the brightest students from the state of Georgia and beyond. One of the concepts that most challenges my methods students is theory development. It was actually during my lecture on theory development in Fall 2008 that it hit me – the reason that even those with the best intentions have been unable to establish a credible positive or negative causal link between democracy assistance and democratic development is that no one has developed a democracy assistance theory. The practitioners and academicians alike who have examined assistance impact have yet to consider the processes through which assistance is expected to effect change.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap. It seeks to develop a theory of democracy assistance that is worthy of all those who sacrifice their time and lives to assist those in need and of all those who honorably question the extent to which such assistance helps or hurts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been inspired by the brave people in closed and transitioning societies who risk their own lives to make better lives for their fellow citizens. I have also been inspired by the dedicated people who sacrifice much as they seek to help people in distant lands live in greater freedom.

I am grateful to Georges Fauriol, Lorne Craner, and the many democracy assistance experts at the International Republican Institute who gave me the opportunity to participate first hand in the process of assisting democratic development abroad. I am always amazed by the extent to which they continually take the time to think critically about their work. I am also grateful to Rhonda Dill and Jeff Lilley for helping me to conceptualize my project in its early stages; and to Margaret Sarles and Barbara Haig for their determination to improve the evaluation practices of the democracy assistance community.

This dissertation would not be possible without the opportunities and guidance given to me by my dissertation committee. First and foremost, Howard Wiarda took me with him to, in his words, “observe the observers” of the 2004 Dominican Republic elections. He inspired me to ask all of the questions that this book seeks to begin to answer. He encouraged me to question my own idealism and write about the topic that I love. As is evident throughout this text, his prolific scholarship is the foundation upon which my work is built. He has inspired, challenged and encouraged me; he has fostered amazing opportunities for me; and he has been patient. I am forever grateful to him, the ideal mentor.

I am also grateful to Loch Johnson, Jeff Berejikian, and Sherry Lawrence for providing me with invaluable and critical advice from the prospectus phase through the oral defense of this dissertation. They led me to consider lines of thought that contradicted my own and this project has benefited greatly from it.

There are so many scholars whose work has greatly influenced this project. Foremost among them is Thomas Carothers, who has paved the way and set a high standard for the democracy assistance scholarship of our time. I have also been influenced significantly by the work of William Easterly, Samuel Huntington, Walt Rostow, Larry Diamond, Jack Snyder, Edward Mansfield, Marina Ottaway, John Most, and Harvey Starr.

Finally, my peers at the University of Georgia were thoughtful sounding boards throughout this project, especially Marie Milward and Bradley McAllister. My colleagues and students at the Georgia Institute of Technology provided me with a work environment of constant intellectual stimulation and inspiration. My husband, Douglas Jordan, my father, Timothy Graham Skelley, and my friends, Kathleen and Pepper Johnson, listened to me talk about the project for countless hours and were continual sources of encouragement. I could not have done this without them.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The United States has a long history of democracy promotion. It has attempted to spread democracy by force in struggling countries since the early 1900s, starting with its neighbors in the Caribbean as part of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. After World War II, the United States and its allies imposed democracies in Europe and East Asia. More recent attempts to bring regime change by force in Afghanistan and Iraq have been the center of great political controversy, both at home and abroad. Controversy over the merits of such endeavors is understandable in many regards, especially given the fact American successes in establishing democracies that have consolidated in the wake of intervention can be counted on one hand.

However, democratization by force is but one method that the United States employs to promote democracy, and a rare one at that. Democracy assistance that provides training and implements institution-building programs in times of peace is much more common. The success rate of this less well-known form of democracy promotion is far more difficult to assess. After all, democratic development is a long term process. It is not clear how or when investment in this long process pays off. The literature and assistance practitioners alike have yet to establish a generalizable causal link between democracy assistance and democratic development abroad. This is because no one has provided a theory that explains how democracy assistance is expected

to yield democratic development. Therefore, this dissertation attempts to develop and test the fit of a theory of democracy assistance abroad.

The study will do so in several steps. First, it will explore the correlation between the spread of democracy and the increase of democracy assistance. Then it will investigate how the political science literature, the public administration evaluation literature, and democracy assistance practitioners explain the relationship between democracy assistance and development. The study will demonstrate that there is a theoretical gap in the literature, and will therefore make the case that no generalizable causal link has been established. It will then propose a theory of democracy assistance, derived from a review of official United States democracy assistance documents and this author's first-hand experience over the course of one year in the Washington democracy assistance community.

The theory will adapt Most and Starr's pre-theoretic framework of opportunity and willingness, and apply it to a new theory of democracy assistance. (1993) As Most and Starr conceived it, states act when two necessary conditions are met – when they have both the opportunity and the willingness to act. Although they first developed this framework to explain state-level decisions to go to war, they noted that it could be applied to individual-level decisionmaking as well.

With this in mind, the following study examines the democratic development literature and the operational assumptions and practices of democracy assistance providers. Each supports the notion that democratic development occurs through change in political culture and institution-building in multiple sectors (e.g., civil society, governance, the rule of law). However, they all ignore the fact that such change is brought about by individuals who have the opportunity and willingness to make a difference repeatedly over time. It is the individuals --

who receive capacity- building (in other words, opportunity- building) assistance and then proceed to pursue change. It is thus the individuals who provide the causal link between assistance and democratic development. Therefore, this study develops an individual-level theory that explains how democracy assistance is expected to yield democratic development abroad.

This dissertation seeks to make an important contribution to the literature by filling a critical gap and proposing a new theory of democracy assistance. It is the first application of the opportunity and willingness framework to the study of comparative democratic development and to the study of democracy assistance. Further, this study tests the extent to which the proposed theory fits the operating assumptions of democracy assistance providers and it identifies the solution to current faulty democracy assistance evaluation practices: baseline and continual post-assistance individual-level data collection and analyses.

The remainder of this chapter will situate the study in the broader context of democracy assistance, the spread of democracy, and the weakness of prior attempts to examine the relationship between assistance and democratic development.

Context

Historically, the most frequent and consistent form of United States democracy promotion abroad has been the provision of bilateral development aid. Long before President Kennedy's Alliance for progress led to the establishment of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 1961, the United States provided bilateral economic aid to allies and potential allies throughout the world. Founded on the principles of modernization,

USAID sought from the beginning to indirectly foster political development through economic modernization. (Rostow 1960; Deutsch 1961; Lipset 1959; Coulter, 1975)

It was the Cold War and the political development USAID supported was ideally democratic, but often authoritarian – so long as revolutionaries did not emerge from poverty to spread communism. The initial regional focus of such bilateral development assistance efforts was, again, the Caribbean and Latin America. But, it was not long until USAID established development missions throughout most of the world.

By the 1980s, the United States began to launch assistance programs aimed directly at democratic development. Initially, these programs focused on elections. As authoritarian dictators fell like dominos from the mid-1980s through the 1990s, USAID and a host of new democracy assistance organizations – such as the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and its core institutes, the Carter Center and the United States Department of State Bureau for Democracy, Labor and Human Rights (DRL) – began to fund a variety of election programs. Examples included voter education and get-out-the vote campaigns, technical assistance for the implementation and oversight of elections, as well as training in political party and campaign development. In essence, not only did the American government provide election assistance, but a cottage industry emerged that sought to do the same.

Since then, democracy has spread throughout the world. The question of which characteristics qualify a regime to be classified as a democracy has been the topic of great debate. However, some degree of consensus has emerged around the notion that regimes can for the most part be placed into three ordered categories, with some overlap: democratic, mixed, and authoritarian. Based on this categorization, the world is overwhelmingly democratic today.

As will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, democratic development continues to progress worldwide. There has been a substantial increase in the number of liberal democracies since the *third wave* began in 1974. (Freedom House, 2010; Huntington, 1991) Since 1995, despite concerns that a hybrid of democracy and authoritarianism has become the trend, there has actually been an increase in liberal democracies and a decrease in mixed regimes. Overall, democracy has advanced more than it has retreated. But, is its advance in part the result of democracy assistance?

The few political scientists who study the effects of peaceful democracy assistance contend, for the most part, that it does more harm than good. The one notable exception is a study sponsored by USAID that establishes correlation but not causation. (Finkel, et. al., 2008) In contrast, assistance practitioners generate evaluation reports that contend that their programs have a positive impact on democratic development in recipient states. However, both groups share one thing in common: they ignore the individual level of analysis. The following scenarios will demonstrate why this is problematic.

Imagine that you are tasked with evaluating the success of a university. First you would have to define what success is. If you think in large scale terms, you may expect the university to train its graduates and encourage its faculty to make a positive contribution to society, either in terms of advancing the economic growth of your country or improving the welfare of your country's citizens. Would you then evaluate success in terms of your country's GDP growth rate over time? Would you seek to determine if there is a correlation between university investment in students and national state-level economic growth? If this was the evaluation strategy you adopted, you would be laughed out of academia. Any trained social scientist knows that if you found such a correlation, it would represent a spurious relationship.

If you think in more moderate terms, perhaps you would measure university success in terms education quality. Would you calculate the attendance rate of your student body or the amount of A's earned in each course's exams? If you did, you would clearly fail to measure education quality. Everyone knows that attendance alone does not yield a quality education. It may be a necessary step toward learning, but many other factors determine the quality of an education that a student with perfect attendance receives. Everyone also knows that the simple quantity of A's a school produces may say more about norms of low standards or grade inflation than about quality of education.

Now imagine that you are tasked with evaluating the success of democracy assistance efforts abroad. Democracy assistance is provided mostly in the form of training and counseling at the individual level – much like education in the university example. Given this fact, would you seek to find a correlation between investment in assistance and state-level democratic development in the recipient country? Would you measure success by counting the amount of democratically-minded citizens that were trained in the recipient country? Of course not. You would be committing the exact same mistakes that were highlighted in the university success evaluation examples.

Then, why is it that political scientists, public administration evaluation experts, and democracy assistance practitioners alike all evaluate democracy assistance effectiveness in terms of post-assistance change in state-level democracy indicators or individual level outputs in terms of numbers of people trained?

One reason for this faulty approach is that a causal theory of democracy assistance has yet to be developed. No one has clearly articulated how democracy assistance spending is actually expected to yield democratic development in recipient states even though thousands of

evaluations of assistance effectiveness have been conducted. This is surprising, given that even first-year empirical methods students are taught that one cannot contend that he or she has found a causal relationship without the development first of a well well-specified theory. (Van Evera, 1991) Therefore, as part of a larger research agenda that seeks to determine if democracy assistance works, this study will generate the first ever democracy assistance theory. (Van Evera, 1991)

It is hard to believe that this has not been done before. What is amazing about the practice of democracy promotion is the critical but questionable assumption upon which it is based: assistance is likely to have a positive impact on democratic development. The assistance community took the preconditions for democracy identified by the modernization school (Rostow 1960; Deutsch 1961; Lipset 1959; Coulter, 1975) and the procedural elements of democracy as identified by more recent scholars (Diamond, 1992 and 1999; Schmitter and Karl, 1991), and began attempting to assist the development of those preconditions and procedural elements in countries of interest.

As the third wave ushered in an ever increasing number of new democratic and transitioning regimes, democracy assistance rose as well. Appropriations for USAID democracy assistance programs alone have increased nearly tenfold in that same time period (Finkel et al 2008). However, the question remains whether democracy assistance from advanced democracies worldwide, much less from the United States alone, has a positive or negative effect on democratic development in recipient states. Although democracy has advanced in many countries in the same period in which the United States has provided democratic assistance to them, it remains to be determined if U.S. democracy assistance has *caused* any or part of this advance.

So far, democracy has not behaved in transitioning states as policymakers have expected -- perhaps with the exception of the democratic peace – so why should we assume that it is responsive to assistance? (Skelley, 2005) As will be explained in chapter two, democratic development as an independent variable does not appear to be positively correlated with better protection of human rights, economic development or stability until democracy gets close to consolidation. Democracy in transition remains for the most part unpredictable and it is possible, perhaps even likely, that despite policymaker assumptions to the contrary and decades of investment towards its advance, democracy is nonresponsive to foreign assistance. This puzzle is worth careful consideration.

Research Questions

This study seeks to make it possible to determine if democracy assistance has advanced democratic development worldwide. In order to do so, it answers a series of preliminary questions. The second chapter answers the question: To what extent is democratic development advancing – or retreating – worldwide? The third chapter seeks to determine how one very important case, the United States democracy assistance community, endeavors to provide assistance in terms of organization and practice. The fourth chapter is a literature review that seeks to determine if there has been a causal link established by scholars between the democracy assistance practices examined in the third chapter and the worldwide advance of democratic development that is evidenced in the second chapter. It finds that no link has been established; and that the primary reason for this is the absence of a causal democracy assistance theory, and

hence flawed causal analyses. Given this critical gap in the literature, the remainder of this study seeks to generate and test the fit of a new theory of democracy assistance.

Therefore, the fifth chapter examines what can be learned from United States democracy assistance practitioner evaluation practices. It asks: What do assistance practitioners seek to achieve and do their evaluation results provide evidence in support of success as they define it? The chapter treats the governmental and quasi-governmental agencies as well as the nonprofit organizations that provide democracy assistance abroad as case studies. It finds that although several of these practitioners have spent many years developing and utilizing evaluation practices that are grounded in the public administration literature, they too have yet to articulate a well specified operating theory of what exactly they expect to accomplish. Drawing upon this review of democracy assistance evaluation practices and expectations, chapter six, then proposes a theory of democracy assistance based on Most and Starr's opportunity and willingness framework. (1993)

Chapters seven and eight are case studies of the United States Agency for International Development's civil society assistance programs in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, respectively. These two case studies seek to determine, first, if the proposed theory of democracy assistance is actually the operating theory of democracy assistance providers. The case studies then seek to determine if provider evaluation reports are methodologically sound and if they find that assistance provider efforts achieve the intended results. The case studies find that the proposed theory is, for the most part, the operating theory of USAID. However, the case studies also find that although the evaluations appear to be attempts at objective and methodical analysis, methodological flaws preclude the establishment of a causal link between

assistance efforts on the one hand and democratic (or even sub-state civil society) development on the other.

Therefore, chapter nine concludes with the finding that we cannot yet determine if democracy assistance leads to democratic development. We can find correlating indicators of assistance spending (or numbers of people assisted) and short term outputs (or long term democratic development), but no causal link can be made until data is collected at the level that reflects the theory of democracy assistance. Such data collection is not possible without extensive provider cooperation.

Although this finding is not necessarily satisfying, it makes an important contribution to the literature and to the democracy assistance community. The study has filled a critical gap in the literature by developing a causal theory of democracy assistance that can actually be tested. If democracy assistance practitioners and congressional appropriators want to determine if democracy assistance is making a positive contribution to democratic development -- and, if it is not, how to reform assistance practices to ensure greater positive impact -- they have to first invest in or at least facilitate baseline individual level data collection and follow up with post-assistance data-collection of the same individuals at multiple points in time. Doing so would allow them to see if their operating theory is correct (in other words if their worldwide efforts yield the expected results) and if not, what changes need to be made.

The obvious concern many may have with this approach is that individual aid recipients in authoritarian or semi-democratic states will not want to provide such information for fear of political recrimination. However, this is not likely to be so in the cases in which assistance is most expected to succeed -- the very cases that could serve as a good first test. (Gerring, 1991)

The upward trend of democracy assistance spending without a clear understanding of

consequences makes investment in such baseline individual-level data collection and its subsequent analysis imperative.

Dissertation Plan

This study will qualitatively examine the critical case of the United States (Gerring 1991), which provides more than 26% of all democracy assistance worldwide. (OECD, 2010)

The study will be conducted in the manner outlined in the table below.

Table 1.1 Dissertation Plan

Unit 1: Literature Review			
<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Research Question</u>	<u>Hypothesis</u>	<u>Methodology</u>
2	To what extent is democratic development advancing (or retreating) worldwide?	Democracy is advancing more than it is retreating.	Literature review and comparative analysis of Freedom House democracy scores
3	How does the United States democracy assistance community endeavor to provide assistance in terms of organization and practice?	No hypothesis was proposed, as the aim of this chapter was reporting.	Qualitative case studies of the agencies and organizations that provide democracy assistance from the United States; participant observation (12 months) and review of the historical record
4	Has the literature or assistance providers established a causal link between the democracy assistance practices and the worldwide advance of democratic development?	No hypothesis was proposed, as the aim of this chapter was reporting and critical review.	Review of the political science and public administration evaluation literature; review of assistance provider's historical records; participant observation
Unit 2: Examination of Practitioner Evaluation Practices and Theory Development			
<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Research Question</u>	<u>Hypothesis</u>	<u>Methodology</u>
5	What can be learned from the democracy assistance practitioners in terms of expected results and evaluations of impact?	Practitioner experience can better inform scholarly studies of democracy assistance impact.	Participant observation; review of provider documents
6	Can practitioner expectations be developed into a theory that is grounded in the extant political science literature?	No hypothesis was proposed from the outset, as the purpose of this section was theory and hypothesis generation.	Theory development based on participant observation and review of provider documents

Unit 3: Case Studies			
Chapter(s)	Research Question	Hypothesis	Methodology
7 & 8	Does the proposed individual level opportunity and willingness theory of democracy assistance match the way democracy assistance providers operate in the real world?	Assistance providers operate under the following four assumptions: 1): Developing democracies need foreign assistance to consolidate. 2): Foreign democracy assistance in the form of training, counseling, funding, and/or exchange programs increases individual capabilities (hence, opportunity) for democracy-building behavior. 3): Participants in democracy assistance programs are willing to subsequently engage in democracy-building behavior. 4): Increased democracy-building behavior among assistance program participants leads to development at the sub-state sector level (e.g., civil society, rule of law, governance, etc.)	Qualitative case studies of USAID evaluation reports of civil society development programs in Haiti (1995 - 2006) and the Dominican Republic (1992 - 2002)
7 & 8	Are provider evaluation reports methodologically sound and, if so, do they find that assistance provider efforts achieve the intended results?	Provider evaluations are methodologically flawed and always find evidence in support of their programs.	Qualitative case studies of USAID evaluation reports of civil society development programs in Haiti (1995 - 2006) and the Dominican Republic (1992 - 2002)

CHAPTER 2

IS DEMOCRACY ON THE ADVANCE OR IN RETREAT, WORLDWIDE?¹

In 1991 Samuel Huntington famously contended that the international system was in the midst of the *third wave* of democracy. (1991) By this he meant that more states were in transition toward democratic governance than were moving away from it toward authoritarianism. Eight years later, Larry Diamond asked whether the *third wave* was over and concluded that there was neither a wave moving toward nor away from further democratization, but instead an emergent trend of illiberal democratic stagnation. (1999) Along the same lines, but more recently, Marina Ottaway has argued that the 1990s ushered in an increase in the number of semi-authoritarian regimes that institutionalized hybrid systems with elections and some degree of protection for civil and political liberties, but no room for real political competition. (2003)

The globalization of democracy and the idea that it has yielded a large number of semi-democratic states raises several issues that this chapter seeks to address. In order to do so, the pages that follow will first address definitional challenges and provide a brief overview of the state of democracy in the world today. This chapter will then consider in greater detail area-specific experiences in democratization, with a view to assessing the universality of democracy.

¹ This chapter was adapted from: Skelley, Esther, “The Globalization of Democracy and Its Implications,” in Wiarda (Ed.) *Globalization*, New England University Press, 2008.

Finally it will evaluate the merits and implications of Diamond and Ottaway's assertions that the *third wave* has given way to a retreat of democracy and the rise of illiberal semi-democratic hybrid regimes.

Democracy Defined

Any discussion of the of democracy must first address definitional challenges. Democracy can be defined based on its Greek roots as rule by the people. However, this definition has many variants. Locke argues that people have natural rights to life, liberty, and property in the state of nature. Legitimate government must be created by consent of the people through a social contract in order to ensure protection of those rights. (2003) In contrast, for example, Rousseau contends that the only way man can be truly free is to subject himself to the "general will" of the community. (1978, p.58) Thus, each individual should yield freedom to a sovereign who will rule on behalf of the general will for the good of the community. This assertion, widely adhered to throughout Latin America, is in contrast to Locke's participatory social contract and proposal that government can protect rights by effective institutional design.

Conceptions of democracy have evolved and expanded over time, as exemplified in those offered by Dahl (1989, 2000), Schumpeter (1950), Huntington (1991), and Diamond (1999). In the tradition of Schumpeter, Huntington offers a procedural definition. He defines a system as democratic to the extent that leaders are elected through fair and competitive nearly universal elections. Dahl goes further in his conception of democracy as a system of open and inclusive government, comprised of several components: effective participation based on organized contestation through fair and free elections as well as freedom of speech and assembly; voting

equality; enlightened understanding; and the right of virtually all adults to vote and run for office. Schmitter and Karl call these the “procedures that make democracy possible.” (1991)

More recently, Diamond has argued that democracy must be broken down into different types, because a singular definition does not reflect reality. (1999) As a baseline, he proposes two types: electoral democracy in accordance with Schumpeter and Huntington, and liberal democracy in accordance with Dahl. Electoral democracies select leaders via universal popular vote in multiparty elections that are both regular and competitive. In contrast, liberal democracy goes further, to include vertical and horizontal accountability, spheres of civil society and private life that are insulated from state control, provisions for civic and political pluralism, and the rule of law with a supreme constitution. Countries that exhibit most or all of these elements of liberal democracy, that have built mature democratic institutions, and govern relatively effectively are considered to be consolidated democracies. In them, power has typically been transferred between opposing parties at least twice through free and fair elections and there is no other means through which authorities seek to attain power.

The number of further subtypes is as large as the number of democracy experts who conceptualize them. However, it is important to at least distinguish between democratizing states and semi-democracies. Both categories of regimes are captured in the *partly free* subgroup identified by Freedom House and used throughout this chapter. (2006) It includes states that are democratizing, but also includes semi-democracies that lie somewhere in between autocracy and mature democracy and not moving toward consolidation. These semi-democratic states are identified, for example, by Diamond as “electoral authoritarian” regimes (1999) and Ottaway as “semi-authoritarian” regimes (2003). Such mixed states have settled into a system with components of both autocracy and democracy. Rather than moving toward democracy and

freedom, they are stuck in a seemingly permanent limbo between democracy and authoritarianism. They feature elections and some liberal institutions, but opposition candidates have no chance of winning. In addition, governance is often weak and although there is some room for political opposition there is wide variance in the protection of civil liberties and the objective rule of law. Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East are full of such partial or semi-democratic regimes. Indeed, such mixed systems are the majority in the third world and comprise what Carothers refers to as the *gray zone*. (Carothers, 2004)

The discussion that follows uses data compiled by Freedom House that categorizes states as *free*, *partly free* and *not free*. This is arguably an oversimplification of the status of democracy throughout the world, but it serves the purposes of this chapter well. Although all states categorized as free are not necessarily consolidated liberal democracies, they are well on their way to that point, with not only competitive elections but also many if not all of the characteristics of democracy identified by Dahl and liberal democracy identified by Diamond. The category of *partly free* states does not distinguish between semi-democratic and democratizing states. However, it does provide a liberal estimate of semi-democratic states; as the number of semi-authoritarian and illiberal democracies is not likely greater than the number of states categorized as *partly free*. It is safe to assume that the *gray zone* is at most as large as the *partly free* category; indeed it is probably smaller given the number of democratizing states that this category includes. Finally, those states listed as *not free* have many of the characteristics of authoritarian regimes, with at most only nominal elections as well as minimal if any protection of civil liberties and political rights. Based on these conclusions and for the sake of simplicity, the sections that follow interchange the terms democracy and liberal democracy

with the *free* category, semi-democracy with the *partly free* category, and authoritarian states with the *not free* category.

The Record: An Overview of the State of Democracy in the World Today

Currently, 46% of the countries in the world are liberal democracies, 30% are semi-democracies, and 24% are authoritarian. (Freedom House, 2010) That is a 21% increase in the number of liberal democracies since the *third wave* began in 1974; as marked by Huntington, with the overthrow of the Portuguese dictatorship and Portugal's subsequent democratic consolidation. It is a 4% decrease in the number of semi-democratic countries and a 17% decrease in the number of authoritarian countries.

Further, in the ten years since Diamond proposed the end of the *third wave* and the beginning of a period of stagnation, the number of democracies in the world has continued to rise. From 1995 to 2009, there has been a 6% increase in the number of liberal democracies, a 2% decrease in semi-democracies, and a 4% decrease in authoritarian countries. Strikingly, of those countries that have broken through to become liberal democracies in the last ten years, only one, Ghana, has made the leap all the way from authoritarian to liberal democracy and zero have made the entire reverse slide. The trend has in fact been one of partial movement toward freedom, without an overall stagnation in the *gray zone* of illiberal democracy and semi-authoritarianism.

In sum, the world is still being transformed by the *third wave* of democracy. Neither a reverse wave nor a period of illiberal or semi-authoritarian stagnation has begun. However, the question remains whether democracy is universal. If so, it is expected that globalization will

continue to contribute to the further expanse of democracy. If democracy is not universal, the world is probably more likely to reach a democratic saturation point and experience a rise in backlash to democracy before the onset of a reverse wave. At that saturation point the *gray zone* may begin to increase in size as autocrats yield to global pressures of liberalization but resist the full leap to liberal democracy. Although the record indicates that we have yet to reach that point, such a growth of the *gray zone* would have dangerous implications. This chapter will address each part of this proposition in turn. It will first assess the universality of democracy in order to determine whether growth of the *gray zone* in the era of globalization is eminent. It will then explore in detail the character of the *gray zone* and the implications of its expansion.

Is Democracy Universal?

As the review of the record above revealed, since the start of the *third wave*, more democracies have emerged by far than other types of regimes. However, there has also been positive and negative movement in and out of the *gray zone*. While some states have remained semi-democratic, several have made their way out of the *gray zone* into liberal democracy. Although the net results are gains for freedom, the question remains whether liberal democracy is universal.

The Western world was the birthplace of democracy and is now comprised entirely of liberal democracies. However, the rest of the world has had a far more mixed experience with democracy. Many view the future of democracy in Africa as hopeless, in the Middle East and North Africa as dim, in Asia as uncertain, in Latin America as fragile, and in Central and Eastern Europe as a combination of continued success and regression. Does this mean that democracy is

not universal? The answer to this question will be based on the following review of the democratic experience in each of these regions.

Africa

Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa lags behind most of the rest of the world, with the exception of the Middle East. The vast majority of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (77%) is either only *partly free* (48%) or *not free* at all (33%). (Freedom House, 2010) This percentage is far greater than the 54% of states worldwide that fall into either of those categories. While Botswana, South Africa, and perhaps now Namibia serve among the best examples of freedom in the region; authoritarian states such as the Democratic Republic of Congo that have attempted to democratize have been plagued with violence and instability.

The bleak picture of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa is often attributed to the ethnic division and economic underdevelopment that plague the region. (Rostow, 1960) A record of ineffective (even failed governance), corruption, and ethnic violence leads one to question the future of democracy there. However, despite the disadvantages that ethnic division and underdevelopment may pose, the region is arguably liberalizing at no slower a rate than that of the rest of the free world.

As Woldemariam suggests, “the single most significant fact of political existence in Africa [is] the artificiality of the national borders and the consequent problem of cultural and linguistic disunity.” (2002) Berman, et. al. likewise contend that “the issue of how sub-national ethnic communities and identities can co-exist with the development of universal citizenship, national identity and strong national democratic institutions remains the enduring dilemma of African politics.” (2004) Ethnicity in Africa poses a significant challenge to democratization on

two dimensions. (Berman, et. al., 2004) Ethnic groups in Africa are dominated by a hierarchical system of responsibilities that contrasts sharply with the equality and liberty dimensions of Western liberal democracy. Further, ethnic leaders are by necessity resource-maximizing patrons for their own groups, therefore are generally not interested in combating corruption or protecting minority rights. Colonialism reinforced and even worsened this reality through ethnically defined (and in some cases artificially created) administrative units. The resulting “politics of the belly” has created clientelist institutions and patronage relationships that make ineffective governance and what Westerners call corruption, the norm. (Bayart, 1993)

Although arguably reinforced by ethnic clientelism (and vice versa), low levels of economic development pose a further challenge to the prospects for democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. As Rostow’s theory of preconditions for democracy asserts, states must progress through several stages of economic development before democratic liberalization and effective governance can concomitantly be achieved. (1960) He contends that “The break-up of traditional societies is based on the convergence of motives of private profit with a new sense of affronted nationhood and of enlarged human horizons.” (1960, p.152) Although many scholars have refuted the existence of economic preconditions for democracy, the mutually reinforcing paucity of democracy and development in Sub-Saharan Africa are hard to ignore. So long as the resource curse continues, in which the export of vast natural resources such as diamonds continue to support kleptocratic regimes, it is only natural to remain skeptical of the advance of freedom in the region. (Ross, 1999)

That said, one must not forget that independence in the Sub-Saharan Africa was only achieved about forty years ago. Ethnic division and economic underdevelopment pose great challenges to liberal democracy in the region; however, democratic consolidation usually takes

several decades at the least. Although much of Africa appears currently stuck in authoritarianism and semi-authoritarianism, Africans must find their own distinct solutions for the hurdles that lie in their path toward democratic development. The way forward may not resemble other democratic success stories in the world, but it is premature to conclude that liberal democracy is not likely to eventually be achieved throughout the region.

The Middle East and North Africa

Skepticism over the prospects for democracy in the Middle East and North Africa has been rooted in beliefs in the resource curse and Islamic exceptionalism. While the West supports oil-rich but authoritarian Saudi Arabia and lauds unfair elections in semi-authoritarian Egypt, skepticism has been further compounded by instability and violence in democratizing Iraq, Afghanistan, and Lebanon (Afghanistan is included in the discussion of the Middle East here, although Freedom House and others consider it Asian). Only one state, Israel, accounts for the 6% of *free* countries in the region. *Partly free* countries make up 17% while the remaining 78% is *not free*. (Freedom House, 2010)

As with Sub-Saharan Africa, the resource curse is an oft cited impediment to advancements in democracy in the Middle East and North Africa. With economies dependent on the export of oil, non-democratic governments function without taxing citizens. High incomes and small populations enable governments to provide for the basic needs of their citizens. Officials thus have little incentive to be representative and the populous is less demanding of government accountability.

Although high levels of per capita income often tend to be correlated with democratic development, this is not necessarily the case in the Middle East and North Africa. Saudi Arabia,

Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, for example, each have a per capita income greater than US\$12,000. (World Bank, 2010) This is well above the threshold typically thought to aid, if not lead to, democratization from within. Of these, only Bahrain and Kuwait are *partly free* or semi-democratic, but without competitive elections. The rest remain authoritarian.

The other key factor thought to contribute to the lack of democratic governance in the region is Muslim exceptionalism – the idea that Islam and democracy are incompatible. However, the Quran does call for mutual consultation in government. This can have, and in practice has had, divergent interpretations. These range from the idea that kings must seek the advice of a small group of elites, to a call for consultation of the citizenry through representative government. Those who believe in the latter interpretation deem democracy not only compatible, but required by Islam.

Further, Stepan and Robertson have made a strong case that the challenge to democracy in the Middle East is Arab exceptionalism, not Muslim exceptionalism. (2003) They find that states with non-Arab Muslim majorities have greater electoral competition than do states with Arab Muslim majorities. Their evidence suggests that non-Arab Muslim states are twenty times more likely to be electorally competitive than their Arab counterparts. Prime examples of this are Indonesia, Bangladesh and Mali; all of which hold competitive elections and are considered to be *free*, but are neither Arab nor in the Middle East. Although this is a compelling argument, Iran stands out as a critical outlier. This non-Arab Muslim majority, authoritarian, and potentially nuclear state is one of the most powerful in the Middle East. Further, the idea of Arab exceptionalism only stokes the fire of skepticism regarding the potential for democracy to succeed in the Middle East.

Asia

Democracy has been far more successful in Asia than in Africa or the Middle East. By now, 41% of the region is *free*, 38% is *partly free* and 21% is *not free*. (Freedom House, 2010) The idea of Asian exceptionalism based on the “Asian values” of hierarchical social structures and communitarianism has been largely rejected as democracy continues to spread in the region. The “Confucianism of everyday life” in East Asia seems to have a higher probability of continued longevity than does “political Confucianism” in governance. (Tu Wei-ming, 1984; Fukuyama, 1998) However, obstacles to democracy remain. The majority of countries in Asia continue to be either *partly free* or *not free*; and the political fate of communist China, arguably *the rising world superpower*, is yet to be determined.

The greatest challenge to a concise overview of the state of democracy in Asia lies in the diversity of the region. The Asian values debate gained momentum in the early and mid 1990s as exceptional levels of economic development occurred despite, or as some argue, because of strict authoritarian control over society and economy, particularly in East and Southeast Asia. However, the Asian financial crisis that started in Thailand in 1997 led many in the region to question the tight and opaque relationships between government, business, and banking sectors. The crisis has been blamed not only on international demands for austerity and privatization by the IMF and World Bank, but also on corruption protected by non-transparent authoritarian and weak democratic institutions. (Diamond and Plattner, 1998; Johannsen, et. al., 2000) Discontent with mismanagement and corruption yielded increased demands for democratic reform following the financial crisis; most notably in Muslim-majority Indonesia with, the 1998 revolution that toppled the authoritarian Suharto regime and began the process of democratization.

Further, Japan, although *free* and prosperous, was governed by the same political party for 54 years, until the August 2009 elections at long last brought an opposition party to power. Democracy in the Philippines has recently lost ground due to rampant election fraud and political intimidation. China has transitioned to a market economy over the last thirty years, but remains an authoritarian, centralized, one-party government that allows almost no space for any sort of political participation.

In the south, India is the lone *free* state, despite rampant poverty and a traditional society based on an anti-egalitarian, hierarchical caste system. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are semi-democratic electoral democracies while the rest of South Asia, from Pakistan to Tibet, remains staunchly authoritarian.

Despite many social and, in some cases, economic obstacles to democratization, the Asian region as a whole continues to experience the spread of democracy. The challenges posed by authoritarian and communitarian values of Confucianism and the hierarchical caste system of India have been largely overcome as several unique brands of Asian democracy have emerged. There is no reason to believe that this trend will not continue; although China, the giant red elephant that can't be ignored in the democratizing region, shows little prospect for political liberalization in the near future.

Latin America

Democracy has spread like wildfire throughout Latin America and the Caribbean during the *third wave*. The percent of *free* countries in the region more than doubled from 33% in 1975 to 71% today, as that of *partly free* countries has declined from 48% to 26%. (Freedom House, 2010) Only two countries remain *not free*: Haiti and Cuba. On the surface the gains for freedom

appear impressive. However, this apparent victory for democracy has failed to meet expectations insofar as it has not alleviated the harsh reality of widespread social inequality, racism, crime, corruption and poverty.

Wiarda has long argued that academics and U.S. politicians who embraced the *Washington Consensus* approach to the region -- democracy, free trade, and open markets – were overzealous in their optimism. (2005) This is because, like Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean are caught between the pulls of globalization/modernization and a centuries-old colonial legacy.

The shortcomings of democracy in the region may very well be traced back to the colonial legacy of authoritarian political structures, hierarchical divisions between classes, and a very minimal capacity for effective governance. Vestiges still remain of the Church-military-landowners triumvirate that dominated political and social life throughout the region following independence; as remains the Latin American version of the political philosophy of corporatism that grants control of civil society to a strong state. (Wiarda, 2005)

However, unlike Africa, much of Latin America and the Caribbean built the foundations of Rousseau-style democracy upon independence nearly two hundred years ago. Many attribute the region's embrace of democracy in the *third wave* to this prior experience with democratic governance.

Although discontent with democracy is widespread throughout Latin America and the Caribbean today and has led to a rise in support for populist political leaders, a reverse wave in the region does not appear eminent. One must not forget that democratic development takes time, even multiple generations; and most of the region started the process this time around less than thirty years ago. Thus far, democracy throughout Latin America and the Caribbean has so

far taken its own unique form – one that incorporates a mixture of strong-man politics, corporatism, patrimonialism and now populism.

It may be hard to turn a blind eye to several discouraging realities in the region: Chavez allows almost no space for political opposition in Venezuela and is cozying up to authoritarian leaders throughout the world; Haiti is a failed state; Castro has recently lived through major surgery to rule Cuba another day; and the drug trade continues to infiltrate politics, most recently so in Guyana. However, more than two thirds of Latin America and the Caribbean lives in freedom. Democratic Mexico, Argentina, and the Dominican Republic, to name a few, have survived devastating economic crises and populist movements have yet to give way to a radical left that destabilizes the region. Democracy may not be progressing as quickly as initially expected, but it is by no means in retreat. The possibility remains that current discontent with democratic governance in Latin America and the Caribbean may yield positive results, if stability holds and governments increasingly respond with capacity-building and reform measures.

Central and Eastern Europe

From Poland's solidarity movement and Czechoslovakia's velvet revolution in the late 1980s to the more recent color revolutions of Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, revolutionary democrats have transformed the former Soviet Union and its satellite states, through relative peace. However, it should not come as a surprise that, in the years since regional frontrunner Poland ousted its communist leaders from power through elections twenty years ago, much of Central and Eastern Europe still has a long way to go on the path toward democratic consolidation. Democracies comprise 48% of the region, however, 24% of the countries remain *partly free* and 28% remain *not free*. (Freedom House, 2010)

With the accession of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia to the European Union as well as the candidacy for accession of Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia; the democratic fate of these states has likely been sealed. Democratic governance was a condition of integration and the incentives to continue the consolidation process are probably too great to disregard.

However, the color revolutions have only just begun the process of democratization for countries such as Georgia and Ukraine. With every couple of steps forward, there seems to be a step back. The Ukraine, for example succeeded in voting authoritarian president Yanukovych out of office in 2004. However, the coalition that replaced him with president Yushchenko was unable to maintain solidarity in the midst of corruption allegations. In the summer of 2006, Yanukovych returned to power as prime minister of the Ukraine, in what many regarded as a setback for democracy and a disappointment for those revolutionaries who experienced their first real taste of freedom. Yanukovych was then elected in 2010 as president on a campaign that promised democratic governance. Many remain skeptical of his intent to deliver.

Even more disappointing has been Russian regression once again to a repressive and increasingly authoritarian state. Uzbekistan and Belarus have likewise regressed in recent years. Belarusian President Lukashenka has sponsored death squads against political opposition groups. Uzbek President Karimov has imprisoned dissidents and destroyed any semblance of civil liberties and political rights. Although Serbia and Montenegro are now considered to be democratic and Slovenia and Croatia have joined the European Union, the violent break-up of the former Yugoslavia has left Kosovo in limbo and Bosnia Herzegovina and Macedonia in semi-democratic systems.

Proximity to Western Europe may be a factor in the likelihood of successful transitions to liberal democracy in the region. Perhaps even the peoples of the former Soviet states prefer or need a strong, centralized government to maintain stability in the face of great ethnic divisions and to shepherd them through the painful reforms required to further economic development. However, it is the opinion of this author that it is too soon to tell. (Rupnik, 1999) The reality is that Central and Eastern Europe only began the transition to democracy less than twenty years ago. Although some states have experienced exceptional success in this regard, as well as strong economic growth, the potential for democratic success in those states that currently appear to be stuck in authoritarian or semi-authoritarian systems remains to be determined.

In sum, Democracy has advanced on every continent in varying degrees since the start of the *third wave*. Although some regions have faced greater challenges in the process of democratization than others; there appear to be very few, if any, cultural, societal, or geographic limitations that may preclude a given country from a democratic transition and democratic consolidation. Ethnic division, being Arab, poverty, and the resource curse seem to be the greatest obstacles to democratic development. However, it is premature to declare that democracy is not universal. It may instead be the case that no singular form of democracy is universal; and that it takes time for any given country to work out its own unique democratic institutions and practices. This certainly has been so in the more democratically successful regions of Latin America and Asia, where in many states democracy has taken a decidedly non-western hierarchical, corporatist, and/or communitarian form. Perhaps this is why states tend to fluctuate somewhat between *not free* and *partly free* before they pass through to the *free* category. There is no straight line to liberal democracy and it often takes generations to develop truly democratic institutions, recent European success stories notwithstanding.

Perhaps this explains the perception that semi-democratic states are on the rise. A review of the record has not revealed a new global wave of semi-democracy, but instead an overall decrease in the number of semi-democratic states since the start of the *third wave*. It appears that as states enter the *gray zone*, they may pause there and start to consolidate semi-democratic institutions. However, the last thirty years alone have proven that long interludes of partial freedom are not indicative of an inability to become more democratic. If international pressure has inadvertently encouraged semi-democratic consolidation, domestic pressure for greater liberty may eventually have an overriding effect.

Semi-democratic consolidation and fluctuation between authoritarianism and some elements of democracy could arguably be but part of a relatively common pattern of democratic development: proponents of seemingly non-democratic values and pressures to advance freedom play tug of war as they work out differences until uniquely indigenous forms of democracy emerge. Kleptocrats may find a hiding place in the semi-democratic interim, but it remains to be seen whether they will be able to maintain such positioning in the long run.

That said, 30% of the globe is *partly free*. If indeed the world has not reached a saturation point of democratization and the *third wave* continues, that percent is likely to continue to shrink. In the mean time, the *gray zone* remains quite large.

Danger in the Gray Zone

The *gray zone* has important implications on multiple levels. Fortunately, the literature provides much guidance on the relationship between regime type and the generally expected benefits of democracy. Consideration is given here to four of these expectations: decreased interstate conflict, increased domestic stability, increased protection of human rights and increased economic development. Large scale quantitative studies that tested hypotheses relevant to these expectations were analyzed to determine whether the findings therein support them. (Skelley, 2005) The results are as follows.

Interstate Conflict: Although there is nothing closer to a universal law in politics than that democracies do not fight each other, democracies still fight non-democracies. Most disturbing is the evidence that semi-democracies or mixed regimes are more likely to engage in interstate conflict than all other regime types. In addition, states in transition are more conflict prone than states which are not. (Doyle, 1986; Gleditsch, et. al., 1997; Mansfield and Snyder, 1995; Mansfield and Snyder, 2005).

Domestic Stability: While it was found that mature democracies are stable in terms of violent domestic conflict, they are not more so than authoritarian regimes. Most instability lies in between the two, as semi-democracies and states in transition toward democracy are the most instable of all regimes. Transition to democracy increases the likelihood of political violence and even civil war. (Byman, 2003; Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2002; Gurr, 2000; Hegre, et. al., 2001) Witness, in spades, Afghanistan.

Human Rights: Democratic states are definitively the best protectors of human rights. However, this is the case only in those that have passed through to maturity. Counter intuitively,

it was found that transitioning and semi-democracies violate human rights more than authoritarian regimes. This is due to semi-democratic leaders' heightened perceptions of threat as well as the absence of institutions through which citizens' civil rights are ensured. (Davenport and Armstrong, 2004; Fein, 1995, Krain, 1997, and Regan and Henderson, 2002).

Economic Development: There is not sufficient, consistent or robust enough evidence to conclude that democracy causes economic development. Studies that find a positive relationship between democracy and economic development are contradicted by an equal number of studies indicating otherwise. There are, however two important results around which a consensus has emerged. First, democracy does not have a negative effect on economic development. Second, economic development has a positive effect on transitions toward democracy and the sustainability of democratic regimes. Therefore, the spread of democracy and economic development do have a positive relationship, albeit not necessarily one that flows in the causal direction proponents of democratization might expect. (Przeworski and Limongi, 1995; Svante and Lane, 1996; Geddes, 1995; and Halperin, et. al., 2005).

When considered collectively, the evidence partially supports some popular expectations of democracy. *Mature* democracy tends to meet three of the four expectations considered here. In sharp contrast, the more states that are transitioning toward democracy or stuck in the middle between autocracy and consolidated democracy, the greater the negative implications are. Time and again, the evidence points to a dangerous *gray zone* comprised of transitioning and semi-democracies that are most likely to engage in interstate conflict, erupt in civil war, and violate human rights.

Where does this leave us? This chapter has found that the era of globalization continues to be characterized by the spread of democracy. The *third wave* has yet to end and the universality of democracy cannot be ruled out. Semi-democracy is not on the rise, but perception of such is understandable; since attempted semi-democratic consolidation can be a prolonged stopping point in the difficult tug-of war process of developing unique forms of democracy. That said, the *gray zone* remains unacceptably large given that the route through it to freedom is too often paved with bloodshed.

The question remains, what impact does democracy assistance have on democratic development, either at the state or global level? The following chapter will explain how the democracy assistance community in the United States endeavors to promote democratic development abroad, in terms of practices and organization. Chapter four will then begin to assess the relationship between assistance and development.

CHAPTER 3

HOW IS ASSISTANCE PROVIDED?

Democracy assistance has long been a part of United States foreign policy, but its prominence as a foreign policy tool reached unprecedented levels during the Cold War. Concomitantly, democracy spread throughout the globe in the *third wave*. (Huntington, 1999) The manner in which the United States has provided democracy assistance has evolved as well. Responsibility for the dispensation of funds and implementation of aid programs has shifted among governmental, semi-governmental, and private nonprofit organizations -- as new institutions have been formed. Approaches and programmatic priorities have shifted as those actors learned from past experiences and from academic research. Such priorities have also shifted along with American strategic interests, the rotation of political appointees in the aid bureaucracy, and movements toward and away from democratic development abroad.

The purpose of this chapter is to lay a foundation of historical context upon which a theory of democracy assistance can be built. This chapter will trace the shifts described above, in chronological order. It will also provide a brief review of the theories of democratic development that have motivated modern democracy assistance practices.

Historical Context

The Early Years: Military Intervention in the Caribbean and Post-WWII Rebuilding

American democracy assistance is often traced back to Wilsonian idealism, starting with Woodrow Wilson's justifications for U.S. involvement in World War I – specifically, “to make the world safe for democracy” (Carothers 1999, 1). However the Caribbean backyard of the United States was the recipient of early democracy assistance in the form of military occupation. The U.S. tried its hand at democratic institution-building and improving governance along with its military interventions in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, before World War I. In the aftermath of the Spanish-American war, the US also sought to develop electoral systems in Cuba and the Philippines. (Carothers 1999)

First, the United States intervened in the Dominican Republic in the early 1900s. After Dominicans declared independence, -- for the second time -- the dictatorship of Ulises Heureaux put its country in great debt in its efforts to provide stability and modernization. Following Heureaux' assassination in 1899, the United States feared an European intervention aimed at collecting debts. Consequently, the U.S. took control of Dominican Customs receipts in 1905 and began economic restructuring in 1915. One year later U.S. marines invaded to quell increasing political instability. (Kryzanek, 1996). Until their 1924 departure, the marines built infrastructure, trained an army led by General Trujillo, and established a democratic government. The marines improved governance greatly and established a police force to maintain order upon their departure. (Spanakos & Wiarda, 2003; Kryzanek 1996). However, shortly after American withdrawal, General Trujillo wrested power from the fledgling democratic government and

began a brutally repressive totalitarian dictatorship that lasted until his US-supported assassination in 1959 (Kryzanek 1996).

Second, the United States intervened in Haiti in 1915, in the wake of government collapse. President Vilbrun Gillaume Sam was killed by a mob and the United States stepped in to prevent European intervention in the Caribbean and to promote political stability and economic development. (Fauriol, 2000; Kryzanek, 1996) The United States military occupied Haiti for twenty years. In this time, the U.S. named a customs receiver, required American approval of new debt, and established an American-led constabulary force. It also attempted to establish a constitutional government and improve governance. However, as Kryzanek notes, “these efforts did little to satisfy the Haitians, who grew increasingly rebellious and contemptuous of the U.S. presence in their country. Contrary to [President] Wilson’s ideals, the Haitians did not see the United States as providing them with an opportunity to develop democracy, but rather as a powerful neighbor instituting a new form of colonialism.” (1996, p.52)

Democratic virtues did not arise in Haiti during the American occupation. Instead, violent anti-U.S. sentiment caused a review of American policy and withdrawal in 1934. Unfortunately, the United States’ withdrawal left a system that would provide the springboard for years of violence to come. During its occupation, the United States attempted to build effective rule of law. It established a section chief system and armed forces, and continued the flow of aid to them throughout the cold war despite their purely repressive function. (Levin, 1995) A period of increased economic decay, failing governance, and violence and decades of autocratic rule followed the U.S. intervention.

In addition, the United States engaged in military interventions in Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, as well as in other countries in the region. In each of these cases the U.S. funded and provided administrative assistance for elections that replaced the governments it had removed from power – which yielded little lasting stability or significant democratic development (Carothers 1999)

These Caribbean assistance disasters did not deter the United States from trying its hand at democracy assistance in Germany and Japan following World War II – with astounding success. Those two great success stories are often cited by proponents of democratization by intervention. In both Germany and Japan, however, the political elites were defeated and society devastated; which makes them exceptional cases. As occurred in the Caribbean in the years prior, the military was charged with building democratic institutions and establishing effective systems of governance. The U.S. helped write both countries' constitutions and implemented civic education programs (Carothers 1999).

Modernization: Assisting Development (and Democracy en Route) to fight communism

The 1959 Castro Revolution changed everything. It brought the march of communism to the doorstep of the United States. Greatly influenced by the social science theory of modernization, President Kennedy saw development assistance as a means to alleviating the poverty that bred leftist revolutionary movements. In fact, President Kennedy appointed some of the strongest proponents of modernization theory to be White House advisers – John Kenneth Galbraith, Lincoln Gordon, and especially Walt W. Rostow. This section will first provide a brief overview of modernization theory and then the aid policies and institutions that emerged from it.

Modernization Theory

W.W. Rostow is the modern forefather of the argument that economic development is a precondition for democracy. He contends that democracy emerges as states progress along five stages of economic growth. “The break-up of traditional societies is based on the convergence of motives of private profit with a new sense of affronted nationhood and of enlarged human horizons.” (Rostow 1959, 152). In contrast to the stages of Marxism (feudalism, bourgeois capitalism, socialism and finally communism), democracy emerges as a state progresses along Rostow’s stages of development: Traditional Society, Preconditions for Takeoff, Takeoff, Drive to Maturity, the Age of Mass Consumerism, and Beyond Consumption. To Rostow, the key is how choices are made. Balancing interests of profit and welfare is made possible through “one man, one vote.” He argues that the concept of equality emerges and the foundations for democratic governance are laid in the Preconditions for Takeoff phase.

Rostow contends that there are two kinds of cases. Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Mid East require(d) fundamental political, social and production changes in a well-established traditional society. U.S, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada were, in Louis Hartz’ words, “born free,” consequently they underwent a primarily economic and technical transition to modern growth. Rostow argues that given the choice, most people would choose democracy. However, societies in transition from traditional to modern states are particularly vulnerable to seizure of power as a means to control a deeply divided country and consolidate the preconditions to launch take-off. Finally, if these six phases are interrupted by war or depression, democracy may not emerge. (Rostow 1959)

Similarly, Karl Deutsch posits that social mobilization occurs in the transition from traditional to modern ways of life through various stages of economic development.

Social mobilization includes the uprooting of traditional society and urbanization as people begin to move to where the jobs are. Consequently, there are increased demands for public services that yield increased political participation and association as well as require the emergence of a central government. This is accompanied by an increased preoccupation with internal affairs and a growing sense of nationalism (Deutsch 1961).

Seymour Martin Lipset finds that the stability of a democratic system is sustained by legitimacy, development and effectiveness. He argues that a stable democracy requires relatively moderate tension among the contending forces, which is facilitated by conditions of the growth of urbanization, education, communications media, and increased wealth. The most important of these is education. Further, variations in systems of government are less important for stability than social structure/economic development. He argues that general income level affects a nation's receptivity to democratic political tolerance norms that make power transfers between parties and efficient bureaucracies possible. This is because a large middle class mitigates conflict by rewarding moderate policies and penalizing extremists. A higher national wealth is also associated with the presence of many relatively independent organizations and associations that help to sustain democracy. He concludes that even if there are conditions such as these in which democracy is most commonly sustained, it has existed in a variety of circumstances (Lipset 1959).

Philip Coulter argues that liberal democracy is, at least in part, one consequence of urbanization, education, communication, industrialization and economic development, or in Deutsch's words, "social mobilization." This is because social mobilization is related to each of three components of liberal democracy (competitiveness, participation and liberties) in varying degrees. Mobilization yields an uprooting of traditional society and increased urbanization as

people move to where the jobs are. Yet, if the uprooting/breaking from tradition phase is completed before the stage of commitment to democratic institutions takes off or if there is disequilibria between levels of mobilization (i.e.: between urbanization and industrialization), instability and repression will manifest (Coulter 1975).

Along a similar vein, Dankwart Rustow contends that country-specific factors accompany democratization. Examples include the USSR's over-extension; deaths of dictators in Portugal, Tunisia, and Paraguay; lost wars (Argentina's Falkland Islands war led to the exit of military dictatorship); Chinese students study abroad only to return promoting democracy; democratic preconditions for international loans; a pro-democracy Catholic Church that helps to crystallize anti-regime sentiment; international sports; and intensifying international communication and economic integration that provide a challenge to dictators pursuing isolation.

He suggests that there is a Catch-22 in which Third World Dictatorships find themselves. If the economy declines under heavy burdens of rising prices, unemployment or foreign debt, the rulers will face growing opposition or violent unrest. If the economy expands with a thriving middle class and growing export sector, pressure mounts for political liberalization and change of regime. Authoritarian rulers often adopt limited moves toward liberalization to appease the opposition or strengthen support for their own regimes, thereby setting off a process of change that cannot be halted.

Kennedy's Aid Policies and Institutions

From these theories of modernization emerged new development aid policies and institutions. As Carothers notes, “Kennedy administration officials believed that timely injections of aid would launch underdeveloped countries into economic takeoff” (1999, 21). Together, Kennedy and Rostow established the United States Agency for International Development, the Peace Corps, and The Alliance for Progress all aimed at alleviating the poverty that was thought to breed leftist revolutions. Democracy assistance was provided at that time under the auspices of furthering development – less so as a foreign policy priority in its own right and more a continuation of economic development programs along the lines of the 1951 Marshall Plan and the 1954 Mutual Security Act.

The 1950s and early 1960s saw the emergence of democratic (or at least semi-democratic) regimes throughout much of Latin America. As Wiarda notes, “The period was referred to as the ‘twilight of the tyrants,’ when a number of Latin America’s most notorious tyrants – Perón, Batista, Trujillo, -- fell from power. Within the United States at least, there was great optimism that democracy had finally arrived in Latin America.” (2005, 13). However, fear that the 1959 Castro Revolution in Cuba would spark a return to tyranny and especially the spread of communism throughout the region prompted several new initiatives. Although Kennedy made a rhetorical commitment to an alliance of the republics of the Americas aimed at furthering freedom and sustainable development throughout the hemisphere, in practice the focus was on economic development.

In 1961, one month before the Bay of Pigs Debacle, President Kennedy called on people of the Western Hemisphere “to join in a new Alliance for Progress – *alianza para Progreso* – a vast cooperative effort, unparalleled in magnitude and nobility of purpose, to satisfy the basic

needs of the American people for homes, work and land, health and schools – *techo, trabajo y tierra, salud y escuela.*” (Kennedy, March 13, 1961) As he noted in the same speech, the Alliance was conceptually based upon former Brazilian President Juscelino Kubitshek’s “Operation Pan America,” an inter-American development program. The Alliance for Progress was initiated by the 1960 Act of Bogota and the 1961 Charter of Punta del Este as “a hemisphere-wide commitment of funds and effort to develop the nations of the Americas.” (USAID, 2008)

Also in 1961, Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act which called for a new agency to oversee and implement development assistance programs. In response, President Kennedy established the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Designed to provide development assistance that would eventually lead to democratic development, USAID initially provided little in the way of political assistance. It was not until later in the 1960s that USAID provided technical assistance to legislatures. However, this was based on the assumption that “more competent, efficient legislatures” would increase economic development. (Carothers 1999, 24)

Congressmen Donald Fraser and Bradford Morse sought to raise the prioritization of political assistance by USAID in 1966 by successfully adding Title IX of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Title IX mandated that “emphasis shall be placed on assuring maximum participation in the task of economic development on the part of the people of the developing countries, through the encouragement of democratic private and local institutions.”

However, as Carothers notes, it did not have the intended effect. It was instead interpreted by USAID to mandate encouraging participation in economic development instead of democratic development. (1999) Time and again, and still today, the US has continually

supported friendly authoritarian regimes as it has prioritized stability and strategic alliances over democracy promotion.

Covert to Overt: Democracy Assistance to Fight Communism

Concurrent with the work of the USAID, from the 1960s to the 1980s, the CIA and Department of Defense were engaged in the fight against Communism. (Ranaleagh, 1986; Carothers, 1999) As Carothers notes,

The Central Intelligence Agency engaged in numerous covert efforts to bolster selected political parties, to tilt elections, and otherwise to influence political outcomes, to thwart leftist movements and to ensure that governments friendly to the US stayed in power...such political work was anticommunist above all, and dictatorial regimes were often the beneficiaries. Moreover, the CIA's methods, particularly the covert schemes to manipulate elections, were patently antidemocratic. Although some of this activity stopped in response to public revelations in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it created a powerful legacy of domestic and international suspicion about any involvement of the U.S. government in elections or political parties abroad -- a legacy with which democracy programs since have had to contend. (1999, 25)

Media exposure of covert funding from the CIA to the privately administered Asia Foundation -- founded by California businessmen in 1954 -- for democracy assistance activities led President Johnson to cut covert funds to and a restructuring of the foundation to focus on economic instead of political development.

This is but one of several steps taken by Johnson, and Nixon after him, to move away from the overly idealistic and seemingly failing development assistance policies of Kennedy and to adopt a more realist strategy that ignored states' domestic politics and instead focused on their strategic posturing. It was not until Carter came to office that the democracy agenda, and in particular support for human rights abroad, became again a foreign policy priority. As Wiarda notes, following Carter's lead, but arguably with a more realist bent, "succeeding Republican administrations discovered that the democracy/human rights agenda, which they had previously denounced as romantic idealism, could be used as an effective instrument in the Cold War." (2006, 180)

In 1983, President Reagan gave a speech at Westminster that "put freedom on the offensive." He effectively announced a war of ideas with that speech – one in which democratic principles would be disseminated and reform-minded actors aided throughout the communist world. Democracy assistance was to be brought into the open and provided by institutes outside the traditional intelligence, military and development sectors (although these sectors would continue their democracy-related work as well).

The speech was born from decades of visionary advocacy by numerous individuals. Most diligent of these was Congressman Dante Fascell (D-FL), who had repeatedly since 1969 introduced a bill to Congress that would create a private organization to provide democracy assistance abroad. In addition, multiple groups of leading American political functionaries had been brainstorming to come up with a plan to create a government-funded "private" organization based on the German Stiftung model. The German stiftungs – non-governmental organizations affiliate with German political parties – have been credited for making a significant positive contribution to the democratic transitions in Spain and Portugal that began the third wave of

democracy in 1974. They did so by supporting and training parties in Spain and Portugal that provided a legitimate, anti-communist, alternative to dictatorships of Franco and Salazar.

These functionaries conceived of an organization that would build on the decades of assistance the AFL-CIO had provided to organized labor groups world-wide. In their view, it was very important to distance the U.S. government from the proposed democracy organization so as to diminish as much as possible criticism that the US government itself was meddling in the domestic politics of other countries, and to ensure that the organization would not provide assistance to countries on purely political grounds.

The organization that they proposed and which was ultimately created by President Reagan and Congress was the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). It is important to note that there was great debate surrounding the creation of the NED and its core institutes. The Reagan administration was intent on bringing democracy assistance out of the shadows of the CIA and providing it in an overt and transparent manner – more reflective of American democratic principles. However, there was disagreement as to where the new assistance apparatus should be housed. In particular, one camp fought to keep it under the United States Information Agency (USIA) which was already running the Democracy Project, a program that was fighting the war of ideas through student exchanges, conferences and media assistance. In the end, the advocates of a new, private, organization won out and the NED was created.²

Funded by the government, the NED was designed primarily to administer grants awarded to four new non-profit, non-governmental organizations. These are commonly referred to as the NED's core institutes or the NED family. They include the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI) – originally the National Republican

² The Democracy Project was originally intended to continue on as a complimentary initiative to the NED, but ended up losing out the NED in the competition for Congressional funds.

Institute for International Affairs, the American Center for International Labor Solidarity, (Solidarity Center), and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE). NDI and IRI were to become the international arm of the Democratic and Republican parties. Although originally intended to work primarily with liberal and conservative parties abroad, respectively, over time they have worked increasingly together across party lines. Solidarity and CIPE, in contrast, have continued as the international arms of the AFL-CIO and U.S. Chamber of Commerce, respectively. In addition to funding the operations of these core institutes, the NED also has discretionary funds which it distributes for the most part as in-country grants to local organizations.

Grants are awarded to provide assistance in the form of training, materials, civic education, conferences, election observations, get-out the vote campaigns, voter registration drives, and the like. Very rarely, if at all, are funds allotted directly to in-country governmental agencies, officials, or parties – such is the case as to avoid direct political “meddling” or favoritism. In fact, the party organizations (NDI and IRI) pride themselves in offering assistance to all political parties and reform-minded democrats who are interested in strengthening democratic institutions and competencies.

Each organization competes for funding on a semi-annual basis by submitting grant applications. Renewals of NED grants require justification based on evaluations conducted in-house by each core institute. Evaluations also are included in quarterly reports and program close-out reports. This process will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

In the first days of the NED, the focus of assistance was building anti-communist political parties in Latin America and getting them elected. However the reach spread quickly and importantly with the 1986 election observation assistance that played a critical role in

influencing Reagan's support of Corizon Aquino over Ferdinand Marcos, a long time U.S. ally in the region. This was the first of many election observations to follow for NDI and IRI and it buoyed their work greatly as evidence that the U.S. democracy assistance was not intent on getting and keeping friends in power. (Carothers 1999, IRI 2007)

By the late 1980s, the NEDs core institutes were providing democracy assistance to Asia – specifically Pakistan, Taiwan, and South Korea. However, this work was kept separate from official U.S. policy throughout the world: supporting friendly authoritarian regimes. One exception was South Africa where USAID began providing assistance in the form of rule of law and human rights programs aimed at ending apartheid (Carothers 1999),

The Washington Consensus: Democracy Assistance and Free Markets

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the failure of communist totalitarianism marked a turning point in the role democracy promotion played in U.S. foreign policy. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, democracy promotion, free trade and open markets gradually formed the three pillars of what came to be called the Washington consensus. This was a reemergence of W.W. Rostow's ideas that economic development democracy were interrelated – that economic development would lead to democratic development and stability, and that democracy would reinforce economic development. (Wiarda, 2006) This consensus took firm root in the G. H. W. Bush Administration and was a critical component of the national security strategies of Clinton and George W. Bush.

In effect, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, all three American presidents framed their foreign policy with the rhetoric of the Washington consensus, and of particular interest to this project, with the rhetoric of a democracy agenda (Carothers 2004). This is due in part to the

appeal democracy promotion has to both idealists and realists. Idealists view the spread of democracy as a moral imperative, one that will improve the lives of the afflicted and generally make the world a better place. Realists view the spread of democracy as an effective means to pursue security interests. Thus, inserting the promotion of democracy abroad into the foreign policy agenda is a sure way to appeal to both ends of the political spectrum.

President G. H. W. Bush did not devote much attention to democracy promotion until the fall of the Soviet Union, when democracy emerged in Eastern Europe and spread throughout the continent of Africa. President G. H. W. Bush then rhetorically supported the advance of democracy, going so far as to make it a cornerstone of his foreign policy agenda. However, his emphasis on the promotion of democracy was inconsistent. It varied by region, was shaped by the particular interests of the U.S. at a given time, and depended on the degree of local pro-democracy activism (Carothers 2004). This strategy of rhetorical devotion but variance of emphasis in practice continued throughout the Clinton administration and has reached new heights under President G. W. Bush and President Obama.³

A content analysis of each official *National Security Strategy* from 1987 through 2002 reveals not only many mentions of democracy, but also many consistent assumptions about the causative implications of the spread of democracy, as listed Table 3.1 below.⁴

³ For a detailed comparison of democracy promotion by these three administrations, see Carothers, 2004.

⁴ For a detailed analysis of the *National Security Strategy* assumptions about the effects of democracy, see Skelley, 2005.

Table 3.1 National Security Assumptions About Democracy

1. the spread of democracy will yield international peace
2. the spread of democracy will increase state, regional, and global stability
3. the spread of democracy will improve human rights
4. the spread of democracy will spread prosperity (and visa versa)
5. the spread of democracy will make the U.S. safer
6. the spread of democracy will make the U.S. more secure
7. the spread of democracy will increase international security
8. the spread of democracy will increase the security of a specific foreign state
9. the spread of democracy will protect the freedom of the U.S.
10. pluralist societies work
11. democracies make natural allies
12. the spread of democracy best serves U.S. interests
13. the spread of democracy reduces refugee flows
14. the spread of democracy decreases ethnic violence
15. democracies are more likely to uphold the rule of law
16. the spread of democracy reduces corruption throughout the world
17. the spread of democracy will increase social progress

Although these assumptions are all stated at least once in at least one *National Security Strategy*, the first four are repeated most frequently by Presidents Reagan, G.H.W. Bush, Clinton, and Georges W. Bush in each of the strategies analyzed. In sum, all four presidents

repeatedly make the assumptions that the spread of democracy abroad will increase stability, the protection of human rights, and economic development. They also all assume that democracy promotion will decrease interstate conflict.

President G.H.W. Bush's democracy promotion endeavors focused on diplomatic pressure to develop democratic institutions and on election assistance. Most notably, during the administration of G.H.W. Bush, Congress passed the Support for Eastern European Democracy Act (SEED). In the words of the State Department, the primary goal of SEED was "to promote democratic and free market transitions in the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, enabling them to overcome their past and become reliable, productive members of the Euro-Atlantic community of Western democracies." (Department of State, 2008)

SEED allocated hundreds of millions of dollars per year for political, social and economic assistance to build democratic, free market societies in the wake of communist failures. SEED programs were to be administered by a host of U.S. agencies, including the Dept. of Labor and the Department of Treasury. However, political assistance has been administered primarily by USAID. SEED funds were initially appropriated for assistance to Poland and Hungary, but have been re-appropriated for assistance to additional countries in the region every year since. (www.ExpectMore.gov, accessed 3/25/2008)

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the 1991 Freedom Support Act and Department of Defense Cooperative Threat Reduction program also allocated on average \$2 billion per year for assistance projects in the region. However, the democracy development portion totaled only 5-10% of all of this aid (including SEED). (Carothers 1999)

In addition to these efforts, NED turned its focus to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, awarding grants for projects totaling somewhere between \$7 to \$10 million per year. Congress

also created the Eurasia foundation in 1993 – a privately administered nonprofit organization, funded mostly by USAID, that assists civil society, private enterprise, and local governance throughout the former Soviet Union.

The Clinton administration emphasized the democracy agenda in its national security strategies far more than any preceding administration. Interestingly, there was great debate in Congress in the early years of President Clinton’s first term over the merits of democracy assistance programs. In fact, many feared funds would be substantially cut and that the NED would be disbanded. In the end, the NED was reauthorized in 1992 by a margin of one House vote (for a detailed account of this fight, IRI Oral Histories, Sen. Bill Brock interview 2007). Also, notably, democracy assistance to South Africa through all of the agencies and semi-private organizations discussed thus far increased exponentially at the end of the G.H.W. Bush administration and beginning of the Clinton administration.

The largest difference between Clinton’s approach to the democracy agenda and that of his predecessors was his focus on accountability and restructuring to increase efficiency and effectiveness. As part of a greater “Reinventing Government Initiative” and in response to the Government Performance and Results act of 1993, USAID in particular went to great lengths in the mid-1990s to adopt what Carothers calls “a corporate-style managing for results system, with precise definitions of strategic objectives, intended results, and indicators of success.” Further, “To USAID, this has meant creating an elaborate bureaucratic methodology to define its objectives in every aid-receiving country and to monitor progress toward them using quantitative indicators” (1999, 288). In addition, President Clinton’s administration was a driving force behind the creation of the Community of Democracies – an intergovernmental coalition of democratic states.

The Ultimate Prescription?: Democracy Assistance to Cure Tyranny, Terror, and Beyond

By his second term, President George W. Bush had made democracy promotion the primary rhetorical focus of his foreign policy agenda. He framed the democracy agenda as a means to defeat tyranny and overcome the war on terror. Strongly influenced by Natan Shransky's notion that freedom can and must overcome fear, President George W. Bush approached the spread of democracy as a moral imperative and a righteous crusade. In his view, the way to transform the remaining footholds of authoritarianism and terrorist birthing grounds, was to spread democracy – if necessary by force.

Although the rhetoric matched the practice of his administration in some cases, in others the policy of George W. Bush favored friendly authoritarians and evoked backlash from many places. The contrast is remarkable between George W. Bush's sharply increased democracy assistance budget (for the NED, USAID, State Department Bureau of Democracy and Human Rights, and DoD) and creation of the Millennium Challenge Account (which places democratic conditionality requirements on loans to developing countries) on the one hand, and close ties to authoritarian regimes such as Gen. Musharraf in Pakistan and King Saud in Saudi Arabia on the other hand.⁵

⁵ During the George W. Bush administration, USAID democracy assistance programs have been brought more closely under the supervision of the State Department, just as the State Department's Bureau for Democracy and Human Rights budget for democracy assistance projects separate from those of USAID has sharply increased. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has overseen a reorganization of the USAID and State Department democracy assistance bureaucracy including the first ever appointment of an Undersecretary for Democracy and Global Affairs, as well as set new standards for accountability – all of which will be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters.

The Democracy Assistance Apparatus of today

The institutional structure of the United States democracy assistance apparatus – or the democracy community as it is often referred to inside the beltway, is thus ever-evolving.

Although democracy “assistance” has long been provided via U.S. military, intelligence, and diplomatic agencies; most presidents since Kennedy have made additions to the democracy assistance bureaucracy, as indicated in Table 3.2, below.

Table 3.2 Democracy Community Timeline

Year Founded	Organization Name	Founder
1954	The Asia Foundation	California Businessmen
1961	United States Agency for International Development	Pres. Kennedy
1977	Department of State Bureau for Democracy Labor and Human Rights	Pres. Carter
1982	The Carter Center	Pres. Carter
1984	National Endowment for Democracy	Pres. Reagan
1984	Center for International Private Enterprise (NED core institute)	Pres. Reagan
1984	International Republican Institute (NED core institute)	Pres. Reagan
1984	National Democratic Institute (NED core institute)	Pres. Reagan
1984	American Center for International Labor Solidarity (NED core institute)	Pres. Reagan
1987	IFES (formerly the International Foundation for Election Systems)	Political Consultant, F. Clinton White
1993	Eurasia Foundation	Pres. G.H.W. Bush
1999	The Community of Democracies	Clinton
2002	The Millennium Challenge Account	Pres. G.W. Bush

The major institutions which comprise the current United States democracy assistance community include the government bureaucracy (USAID, State-DRL, DoD, CIA, Treasury, Energy, and DoJ), the Congressionally funded “non-governmental” organizations (NED and its core institutes – IRI, NDI, CIPE, and Solidarity, as well as the Asia and Eurasia Foundations), and independent non-governmental organizations (The Carter Center and IFES).

All of these institutions receive at least partial funding either directly or indirectly from congressional appropriations, and each in turn provide assistance grants to local nongovernmental organizations in foreign countries. In addition, all of the non-governmental organizations, including the NED and its core institutes, solicit and receive grants from private foundations. See the “Sources of Funding for Democracy Community” figure below.

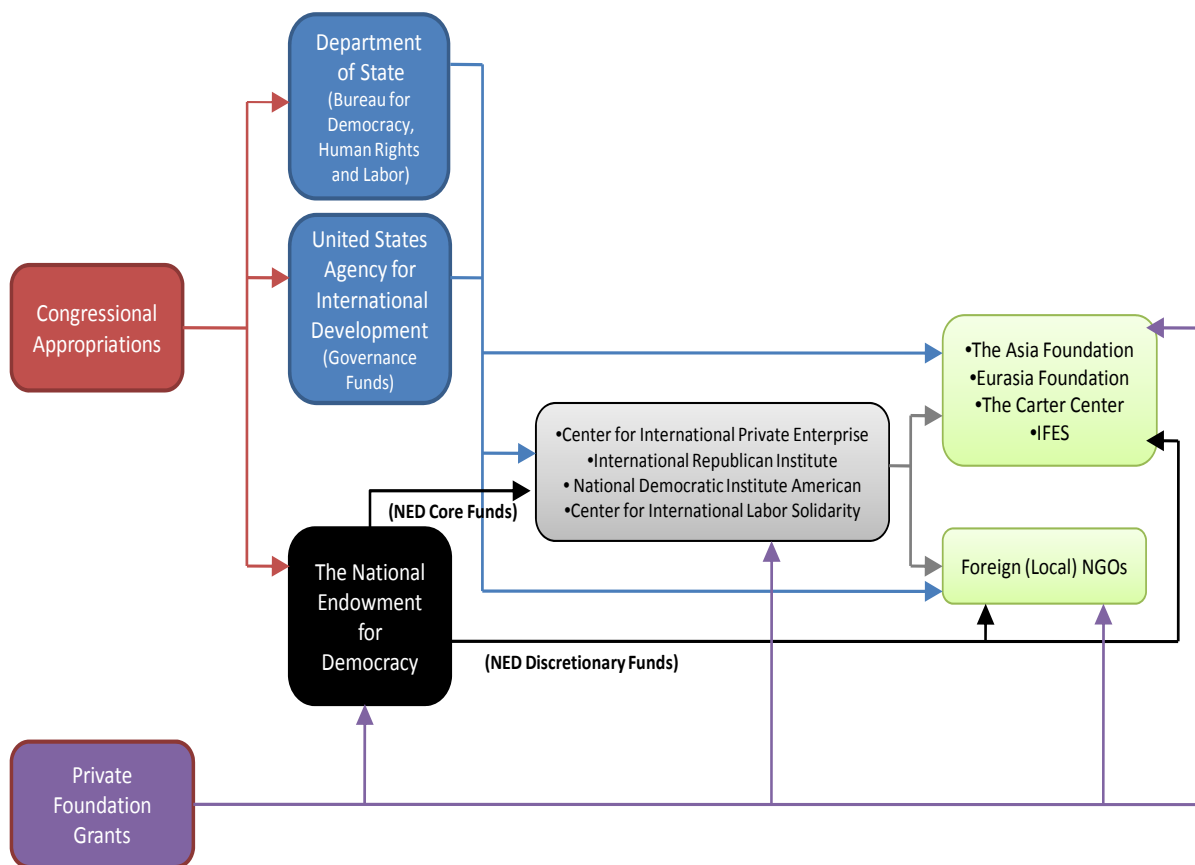


Figure 3.1 Sources of Funding for the Democracy Community

In conclusion, the United States has been providing democracy assistance abroad since it first invaded the Dominican Republic in 1916 as part of the Roosevelt corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. From its efforts to establish a democratic government there, to its most famous successes in rebuilding Germany and Japan after WWII, American democracy assistance was synonymous to militarized regime change. This conception of democracy assistance has been

reaffirmed in recent years with the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. However, the vast preponderance of democracy assistance that has been provided by the United States (and its Western European, Latin American, and Japanese counterparts) over the last half of the twentieth via more moderate means.

Presidents Kennedy and Carter began a systemic shift toward peacetime democracy assistance based on the modernization school's theories of democratic development. They and every president since have added to the democracy assistance bureaucracy, initially to support Containment, then to put democracy on the offensive at the end of the Cold war, and finally to liberate people from tyranny as an element of the War on Terror. After the Cold War, democracy assistance was provided to a greater extent through American NGOs working abroad as well as indigenous NGOs. In recent decades, increased emphasis has been placed on results oriented assistance and great strides have been taken toward seeking to achieve greater accountability. As a result, direct funding of indigenous pro-democracy organizations' advocacy activities has declined and emphasis on the provision of training, mentoring, and counseling through both American and indigenous NGOs has increased. The question remains, are these ever-evolving democracy assistance bureaucracy and assistance tactics effective? For an answer to this question, we turn to the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DOES DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE YIELD DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT?

A LITERATURE REVIEW

As outlined in the previous two chapters, there has been much research conducted on democracy as an independent and dependent variable and some on the bureaucracy of the democracy assistance community. However, little has been done by political scientists to examine the causal relationship between democracy assistance and democratic development. Those studies which do examine this relationship have several critical weaknesses.

This chapter will examine the political science literature on the topic. It will then turn to the democracy community's evaluation practices and the public administration evaluation literature to determine if the gaps in the literature are filled or if the methodological flaws are corrected across disciplines.

The Jury is Out: Democracy Assistance Impact According to Political Science

Any examination of the effectiveness of democracy promotion must begin with Peceny, who makes the greatest contribution to this body of literature. However, he focuses almost exclusively on the use of force as a tool of democracy promotion while ignoring all other tools of the trade. He finds a negative relationship between intervention and democratic development.

(Peceny 1999a and 1999b; see also Dupuy, 1997 and Dobbins, 2003) Others assess foreign assistance writ large, with a focus on development or disaster assistance. (Easterly, 2006). There have also been many case by case analyses of international election observation activities, institutional design, and civil society development programs in select countries. (Åslund and McFaul, 2006; Carothers, 2006; Wiarda and Skelley, 2004) But the only two scientific studies that provide comprehensive, large-n analyses of democracy assistance impact do so based upon questionable models – and yield conflicting results. (Knack 2004 and Finkel et al 2008)

This is due in large part to the difficulty of assessing causality in the relationship between non-military (or soft) assistance and democratic development. Democracy itself is hard to objectively quantify given the multitude of non-western variations of design and practice. Further, there is no easily accessible dataset of international democracy assistance providers, recipients, or amounts. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is working on compiling such a dataset, but it is to date very incomplete. The United States democracy assistance community's records alone are not well organized nor easily accessible.

With all of the possible factors and actors that contribute to positive and negative democratic development, establishing a relationship between assistance and development is even more elusive. Knack made an attempt with a model that examines the relationship between foreign assistance and democratic development in recipient countries. (2004) He found no correlation between the two. However, he used quantities of foreign assistance as a proxy for democracy assistance – a poor proxy at that. After all, foreign assistance includes disaster assistance and development assistance in addition to democratic assistance, and the first two exponentially dwarf democracy assistance amounts.

Finkel et al have made the best and most comprehensive attempt to examine the effectiveness of democracy assistance, in the first two parts of a three part study funded by USAID and administered by the National Academy of Sciences. (2006 and 2008) They examine exclusively USAID democracy assistance funds and especially in their second study are careful to note important exogenous and endogenous variables. However, they only include USAID data in their analysis, at the exclusion of all other U.S. democracy assistance expenditures as well as those from other donor countries. Still, most problematic is the assumption of causality. For example, the Finkel et al study contends that USAID makes a positive contribution to democratic development in recipient countries because every US\$10 million spent on democracy assistance is correlated with five-fold increase in annual democratic change (when compared to the world annual average in democratic change for a state without assistance). (2008, p. 2)

However, this conclusion ignores the reality that endogenous culture (eg: Arabic exceptionalism, ideological cleavages, or high levels of civic engagement) and the presence of political/ socio-economic preconditions may also constrain or foster the possibilities for democratic development, regardless of foreign assistance. They do not sufficiently control for these factors.

Also important is the possibility that donors spend more on the countries that pose either the least or the greatest challenge to democracy – selection effects. Further, it may be necessary to disaggregate aid from multiple countries to determine which donor's aid was effective and why. It is possible that USAID funds are positively correlated with democratic development in target states because other countries are providing effective assistance in those same states, and that USAID funds actually have nothing to do with positive outcomes.

In sum, those who have tried to assess the relationship between democracy assistance and democratic development with a large sample have faced several obstacles: selection effects and endogeneity problems, excluding sufficient critical exogenous variables (such as other donor contributions and other state/non-state actors' activities), consideration of endogenous variables such as political culture, lack of data, problems of disaggregating donors, and mixed results.

There are of course a host of comparativists who examine democratic development in their countries and regions of interest and many of these examine the role that democracy assistance – or as many view it, meddling – plays in it. (See for example, Åslund and McFaul 2006, Fauriol 2007, Wiarda 1999).

However, these comparativist studies provide few generalizable conclusions about the effectiveness of aid. They also suffer from selection effects, insofar as those who choose to examine the role of democracy assistance do so usually because of the extreme role it played in furthering democratic development or undermining it. The focus in this body of work tends to be on the extreme ends of the spectrum, while ignoring the vast majority of democracy assistance programs that are likely to have had more moderate effects, if any at all. An exception is the work of Carothers on assistance to political parties, in which he finds “modest positive effects” on political party development across multiple cases in several regions – Romania, Russia, Guatemala, Mozambique, Morocco, and Indonesia (2006, 166-176). Although this moves us in the right direction, it is quite limited.

Searching for Answers Outside of the Field

In actuality, those who have devoted the most attention to assessments of democracy assistance impact are not political scientists. Instead they are the practitioners who work for the various agencies and organizations that administer and implement democracy assistance programs worldwide. In addition to developing programs, these practitioners are required by government and private donors to assess every one of their democracy assistance programs on a semi-yearly basis in order to improve upon past programs, adjust to changing foreign policy priorities, and account for expenditures.

These assessments take the form of continuance proposals, quarterly reports, annual reports, and closeout reports. The reports are generated to satisfy donor requirements and are intended to factor into programmatic decision making by the donors and practitioners alike. Consequently, the methodology and content of these reports vary according to donor requirements. Although private donors and the National Endowment for Democracy require primarily qualitative reports, the largest American donors (USAID and the State Department) require evaluation frameworks derived from the literature in the field of public administration.

Given the continually-expanding federal budget for democracy assistance abroad -- and assuming that democratic development is at least a primary objective of this assistance -- it is expected that the evaluations produced by practitioners have found democracy assistance to be effective. However, deeper examination is required -- and will be conducted in the final unit of this study -- to determine if this is indeed the case.

Further, if one is to incorporate practitioner evaluations into an examination of the impact of democracy assistance, several questions must first be answered: Are the evaluation

requirements scientifically rigorous? What is the political context in which the evaluations are conducted? Are the evaluations skewed by practitioners' pursuit of continued funding? Do the evaluations factor into programmatic decision making?

The following chapter will seek to answer each of these questions as well as to determine if practitioner evaluations have indeed found democracy assistance to be effective. First, however, an overview of the history of and literature on evaluation will be provided here.

Evaluation for Public Administration

The first task is to explain what exactly is meant by evaluation. Weiss offers an excellent definition in her seminal textbook on research evaluation: "Evaluation is the *systematic assessment of the operation and/or the outcomes of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards*, as a means of contributing to the *improvement of the program or policy*" (1998, p.4; emphasis in original). She goes further to note that this is distinct from more informal evaluations that program staff and managers produce in staff reports based on "intuition, opinion, or trained sensibility." (1998, p.4)

The practice of formal evaluation in American public administration took off in the 1960s, but its roots can be traced to civil service exams in China in 2000 B.C.E. (Paddock 2001). In the West, evaluation dates back to the 19th century when assessments were made of the contribution education made to crime reduction and that roads made to the economic development in France, and formal evaluations of school performance were conducted in the United States (Weiss 1998, Paddock 2001). Also in the U.S., formal evaluation was used some to assess President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs, but it did not rely on

scientific methods until the 1960s when the government commissioned evaluations for a myriad of programs ranging from education to health care.

By the 1970's the U.S. government established the Evaluation and Program Implementation division of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and was using evaluations of trial programs to determine whether or not to fund them on a large scale (Paddock 2001, Weiss 1998). Since the 1960's however, most scholarship on evaluation has come from the field of education. To date, graduate level evaluation programs are housed primarily in university departments of education, psychology, or public administration. Evaluation theory and methods cross disciplines and, as Weiss notes,

Evaluation differs from other kinds of research in deriving its central questions from policymakers and practitioners, the intended use of its results to improve programming, its situation in a turbulent action setting, and its reporting to nonresearch audiences. The evaluator has obligations to the organization that funds the study, to the larger field of programming (education, physical rehabilitation), and to the social sciences. (1998, p.19)

There are roughly three branches of evaluation scholarship, which Alkin refers to as: "methods," "value" and "use." As he notes, these three branches stem from "a dual foundation of accountability and systematic social inquiry" (2004, p.12). In essence the goal of evaluation in public administration and corporate enterprise alike is accountability and one means to achieve it is through systematic social inquiry.

The Methods Branch

The "methods branch" proposes several approaches to structuring evaluation frameworks, collecting data, and reporting evaluation results. Its focus is building sound evaluation practices

based on the standards set forth by social science research. As with the social sciences, evaluation methods seek to generate “generalizability” and “knowledge construction” (Alkin 2004, p.13). Alkin and others credit Ralph Tyler (1942) with the application of hypotheses to evaluation of education programs in the development of “objectives-oriented” evaluation. As Alkin notes, “Furthermore, Tyler avows that the curricula to be evaluated are based on hypotheses: These are the best judgments of program staff as the best set of procedures for attaining program outcomes. The purpose of evaluation is to validate the program’s hypotheses.” (2004, p.18).

It is the evaluator’s role then to identify and define program goals in terms of expected outcomes, examine procedures, assess if those procedures are implemented as intended and, if so, whether they yield the expected outcomes. The type of tests used to determine impact vary, just as they do throughout the social sciences, from comparative case studies to experimental or quasi-experimental designs designed to minimize bias (see Campbell and Stanley 1966, Suchman 1967). Suchman in particular sought to distinguish traditional notions of evaluation in terms of judgment from the scientific evaluation research he advocated and helped to develop (Alkin 2004).

From Tyler’s early work sprung a body of literature devoted to the development of objectives-oriented evaluation. It is this type of evaluation that has been employed by American, European, and international development assistance organizations for decades. Recently, the U.S. State Department and USAID have applied “objectives-oriented” evaluation to democracy assistance programs as well.

In addition, these organizations employ what Alkin calls “theory-driven evaluation” (2004, p.27); which was developed by evaluation methodologists who sought to account for the theoretical assumptions that link program inputs to expected outcomes in evaluation design (Chen and Rossi 1993, Weiss 1991). Their intention was to develop evaluation practices that could distinguish between faulty program theory assumptions and faulty program implementation as the cause of program failures.

The Value Branch

The “value branch” of evaluation theory is reactive to earlier methods theories. It incorporates modernist and constructivist perspectives. It asserts that it is the role of the evaluator to place conclusive value judgment on subject programs. As with much of the constructivist literature in political science, this branch views human subjectivity in a positive light. This is because it considers the subjective professional judgment of an evaluator who interprets results from the application of rigorous evaluation methodology to be a critical contribution to the evaluation process. In fact, Eisner goes so far as to characterize the evaluator as a “connoisseur” whose experience and expert eye adds value and reliability to the evaluation product (1991).

In effect, this branch acknowledges and lauds the subjectivity inherent in evaluation, from the selection of goals/outcomes to be evaluated and the development of indicators, to measurement and final assessments of program value (see Scriven 1974). It is critical of the scientific method as applied to evaluation and accepts that bias cannot be eliminated from evaluation work.

From this perspective emerges an alternative definition of evaluation: “a process to judge success, assure accountability, and determine more effective resource allocation. It does not simply measure; it also judges, or assigns value. It seeks to assess social utility. It is concerned with both program process and program product” (Ott 2001, p.360)

Modernist variants of this perspective focus on the context that determines valuation (see Stake 2001). Some from the “value branch” suggest that the best option is to provide competing measures, assessments, etc. to evaluation consumers so that they can make the most informed programmatic decisions possible – through “adversary evaluation models” (Alkin, p.36; see also Owens 1973 and Wolf 1979). Still others such as MacDonald (1979) and House (1993) consider stakeholder needs as most important, therefore, assert that competing stakeholder values should be incorporated into assessments; and that qualitative analyses are best. As Connolly et al note in what they call a “multi-constituency view,” determination of program effectiveness is “inevitably contingent on whom one is asking.” (1980, p.352) Finally Guba and Lincoln take a truly constructivist approach, in what they call “Fourth Generation Evaluation” (1989). This approach seeks to account for competing perspectives and values among stakeholders and incorporate them all into a single compromise assessment.

The Use Branch

Similarly to the “value branch,” the “use branch” focuses on stakeholders, but its primary concern is the application and consumption of evaluation products. It asserts that evaluation practices must take into account the audience for whom evaluations are intended if they are to best inform decisions. Some scholars in this branch contend that the consumers of the evaluation product should play a central role in the development of the evaluation methodology and

framework for a given project in order to ensure that the evaluation helps the decision making process.

Stufflebeam developed the CIPP (context, input, process and product) model that calls for stakeholder consultations throughout the entire evaluation process (2001). USAID and the State Department have utilized the CIPP model to some extent for democracy assistance evaluation, however the stakeholders consulted are for the most part members of grantee organizations (practitioners) instead of the citizens of the recipient states who are the ultimate stakeholders. Although USAID in particular has gone through phases of incorporating stakeholder input, it has not consistently done so.

Similar models, called “utilization models,” focus on assisting program administration through evaluation design and implementation that takes into account staff input at all levels (Provus 1971), minimizing the costs of evaluation (Wholey 1983), developing evaluations that help the most stakeholders possible (Patton, 1978), and collaborating with decision makers in the evaluation process (Cousins and Earl 1995, King 1998). Patton even goes so far as to suggest that evaluators should become “part of the program design team” – meaning they should not only evaluate but also help design/reformulate the programs under evaluation (Patton 1997, p.107, quoted by Alkin 2001, p.49). Alternatively, Fetterman contends that evaluators should “empower” clients by teaching them to conduct their own evaluations (1996).

Evaluation of Democracy Assistance Programs

As noted above, the democracy assistance community has for the most part employed the objectives-oriented approach to evaluation, and USAID and the State Department in particular, have specified an incomplete logic theory of change model that articulates the theory behind their democracy programming. The democracy assistance community has also experimented with various utilization models, from contract-evaluators' seeking staff input on evaluation design to building in-house evaluation teams.

Several questions remain, however, regarding the validity and reliability of such evaluations. It is possible, that program evaluations, conducted by in-house staff or independent contractors alike are simply a form of bureaucratic red tape that does not factor into the policy-making process. Further, it is possible that the vast majority of evaluations have yielded subjectively positive assessments of democracy assistance activities. Both of these possibilities have been considered in the evaluation literature.

Most notably, Bollen, et. al. provide a thorough, scientific study of the quality of USAID democracy and governance evaluations (2005). They conduct a content analysis of a carefully selected sample of 25 evaluations of projects throughout the world from 1995 to 2005. The evaluations were conducted by contractors (such as Management Systems International and the Center for Development Information and evaluation) as well as by USAID and the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO).

They found that the evaluations, across sources, were not of high quality based on three categories of factors: "information on inputs," "information on results," and "controls for confounding factors" (2005, 190). Although I expected shortcomings in attempts to control for

confounding factors, weaknesses in the other two areas were more extensive than expected (based on the fact that reporting on inputs, or program activities, and on the immediate results of those activities seems straightforward; whereas, political scientists have been unable to find a true causal relationship between democracy assistance and democratic development in recipient countries, as noted above).

Bollen, et. al. find, “a lack of methodological accuracy and inappropriate coverage of important information about the impact of assistance interventions.” First, the data collection methods of the evaluators overall are not transmissible. In addition, they find insufficient information on program activities, personnel and funding as well as too much focus on short-term results of each activity with little consideration of long-term democratic development objectives. However, in this author’s view, failure to consider long-term objectives is actually not a shortcoming, but instead perhaps a wise approach given the Bollen et. al. finding that the evaluations fail to sufficiently consider confounding factors. In their words, “Nearly all of the evaluations fail to discuss or rule out other possible explanations for a relation between USAID activity and its alleged effects. The single-group, post-test-only design was the usual evaluation design, making it extremely difficult to attribute effects to USAID interventions” (2005, 199).

As they note, these shortcomings are not suffered by USAID evaluations alone. Picciotto (2003) as well as Forss and Carlsson (1997) find similar weaknesses in evaluations of international aid of a variety of sorts and by other country-donors. Most recently, Clements has found that evaluations in *development* aid suffer from positive bias due to the organizational structure of development agencies. As he notes, “The accountability chain for development managers is weak, incentives for legitimization conflict with those for effectiveness, and the development task is a very hard one” (2008, 195). In a separate study, Clements et. al. (2008)

also note the evidence in support of the hypothesis that economic development assistance has minimal impact in general, which is confirmed time and again by many econometric studies (they note for example the work of Mosley et al 1987, Boone 1996, Easterly 2003, and Burnside and Dollar 2004). Clements, et. al. attribute this strong evidence to the conflicting political and developmental goals of program managers and propose organizational changes that will improve the quality of evaluation and, therefore, they assume, increase the positive impact of development programs.

The primary flaw they identify in the system lies in the reality that although managers may seek positive development impact, “they often face incentives to ‘move money’ to fulfill spending targets, or a so-called ‘project-approval culture,’ undermining the quality of project designs. As Martens, et. al. find, this is because ‘committing and spending budgets’ are easier to monitor than actual program impact. (2002, 20); and as Pritchett finds, aid managers “have incentives to under-invest in knowledge creation, because having credible estimates of the impact of their preferred program may undermine their ability to mobilize political (budgetary) support” (2002, 251; quoted in Clements 2008, 197).

Finally, Martins, et. al. argue that politicians also benefit from low quality evaluations, because of the informational gap it provides that allows them to pursue their own political agenda under the guise of accountability.

Therefore, in addition to the fact that political scientists have yet to find a causal relationship between democracy assistance and democratic development, the literature on both democratic and economic development assistance evaluation has reached a consensus on the low quality and positive bias of assistance evaluation. The evaluation literature is, however, optimistic that the problem does not lie at the root of evaluation (meaning in the models

prescribed by evaluation experts) but in the bureaucratic and organizational politics of the administration of aid -- from the politicians who appropriate the funds, to the agency administrators who make specific program funding decisions, all the way to the agency staff and contract evaluators who write the evaluation reports.

The lone exception is Crawford, (2003), who contends that objectives-based logic framework approach (LFA) employed by USAID (also by the Canadian and Swedish international development agencies and the European Commission) is ill-suited to development assistance evaluation. As he notes, this view has long had many supporters in the development assistance community based on the common belief that despite its rigorous methodology, LFA is best at evaluating immediate project-level impact, but not more generalized development impact. In his own words,

In sum, logical framework analysis is rejected here, as are ‘results-based’ approaches, as inappropriate for evaluating democracy and governance [DG] programs. Such instruments of conventional evaluation offer little to resolve the challenge of evaluating DG assistance. They are narrow in focus, more pertinent to the limited functions of project cycle management, with little or no consideration for the range of factors involved in complex political change. They are oriented to providing an immediate assessment of newly completed projects, largely blinkered to possible negative, unintended effects, and less able to trace medium to long term impacts. The (pseudo-)scientific approach is unable to cope with the dynamic political context in which DG activities are embedded. LFA offers an inappropriately technocratic solution to a political problem. It is concluded that evaluating democracy and governance assistance is more art than science.

Beyond evaluation scholars, Carothers (1999) has been especially vocal in (and well received by) the democracy assistance community in warning against the mal-effects of evaluation requirements that limit programming options to those which yield quantifiable results. Although Carothers appears to be closed-minded in regards to quantitative methods and (perhaps as a self-admitted lawyer-turned democracy assistance scholar with little if any quantitative analysis training) unaware of its merits, his critique of evaluation captures the anti-scientific sentiment pervasive in the democracy assistance practitioner community writ large, weary of the reality that “the evaluation tail begins to wag the program dog” (Carothers 1999, p.294).

Crawford (2003) notes that LFA fell out of favor following Carother’s critique of evaluation in general and the concomitant increasing policy-community consensus that democracy assistance by its very nature cannot be evaluated quantitatively based on large-scale democratic development objectives. USAID began to return to qualitative case studies based on a three-part approach that incorporated a pre-test, or analysis of pre-assistance political context, an assessment of project implementation, and impact analysis based on process tracing. Crawford thought that this was a step in the right direction, although he called for a greater participatory approach consistent with the aforementioned “use branch’ in which local democrats – the true stakeholders -- would conduct the qualitative evaluations themselves.

Shortly after this shift toward qualitative evaluation began, Secretary Rice (herself a political scientist) took the helm of the State Department, brought USAID oversight into her agency, and launched a reporting and evaluation reform endeavor that yielded yet another version of quantitative LFA evaluation “rolled out” or implemented throughout both agencies across projects over time. In essence, a new round of thought and great resources were put into a new and improved version of LFA evaluation. It is important to note that in the midst of this

transition back to LFA, Bollen, et al conducted their analysis of democracy assistance evaluations and found that the LFA and case study evaluations alike suffered from methodological weaknesses and inconsistencies.

In sum, the evaluation literature has blamed bureaucratic and organizational politics for the shortcomings of evaluations while Carothers and Crawford are critical of the methodological approach of evaluations. Although both criticisms have merit, they ignore the most important flaw of all: an ill-conceived theory of change. Similarly, the large-N examinations of democracy assistance impact found in the political science literature test the wrong hypotheses and the democracy community itself has struggled with how best to examine program effectiveness for accountability and learning purposes.

This is because the fundamental theory that motivates democracy assistance and forms the basis of evaluation design and political science tests of impact is ill-conceived. In fact, the impact of democracy assistance can be determined through evaluation or political science analyses so long as they take into account the reality that most democracy assistance is actually publically funded training and mentorship that is intended to increase individual and organizational capabilities in recipient countries. Further, it seems to be understood by donors that these capabilities are necessary, although not sufficient, for democratic development. The following chapter will examine practices and perceptions within the democracy assistance community in order to test if these conclusions are correct and if they can inform a new theory of democracy assistance.

CHAPTER 5

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM ASSISTANCE PRACTITIONERS?

It has been demonstrated in the literature that democracy and development assistance evaluations are often subjective and do not factor into the decision-making practices of assistance organizations. The literature proposes ways to improve upon this, including: tasking evaluations out to independent contractors, revising evaluation methodology, and bringing decision makers into the evaluation design process so that they have a stake in and begin to rely on evaluations for decision-making purposes. However, each of these suggestions does not consider the possibility that the logic of change reflected in the evaluations is flawed.

Donor organizations may, for political reasons, want to report results on a grand scale, and use evaluations to justify the expenditure of taxpayer dollars on assistance programs. However, the evaluations they are required to complete exaggerate expectations to the extent that the completed evaluations cannot possibly portray an accurate picture of assistance programming reality and serve as a valid justification for further funding. That is because the logic model of change, upon which the evaluations are constructed, is flawed.

The true aims of the democracy assistance community are to increase individual and organizational capabilities in recipient countries, as a necessary but obviously not sufficient condition for democratic development. Further, the evaluations used to assess effectiveness are

constructed from a theory of change that makes great causal leaps which the practitioners themselves do not buy into; and which consequently do not aid the programmatic decision making process.

This chapter will demonstrate as much through an examination of the evaluation practices, impact perceptions, and decision making processes of the major U.S. foreign democracy assistance donors: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID); The State Department Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL); and the National Endowment for Democracy.

The USAID and The State Department

USAID is the largest contributor to democracy assistance among U.S. agencies. USAID has spent \$9 billion since 1989 to promote democracy abroad, with a current median annual budget of \$5 million per country. Over the last few years, the annual USAID democracy assistance budget has risen to approximately \$1.5 billion. (Carothers, 2009) The State Department's democracy assistant budget is approximately \$500 million -- half of which allocated to programs in Iraq. (Carothers, 2009) USAID and the Department of State have worked together since 2006 to develop a common "Foreign Assistance Framework" that identifies the primary goal of foreign assistance across both agencies: "To help build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system." (Department of State, 2007) This endeavor built upon an earlier framework developed by the USAID Center for

Democracy and Governance in response to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993.

The 1993 framework was the first of its kind to be applied to democracy and governance (DG) work and was intended to serve as a tool to monitor program performance and help USAID management in the decision-making processes. (USAID, 1998) From the outset of this effort, USAID formally recognized that the causal link between democracy assistance and democratic progress is elusive,

Results frameworks are supposed to reflect a causal hypothesis, but this is not always the case with the framework used here. A causal framework, that is, should illustrate the rationale behind a program, so that reading down the results “tree” answers the question of how you are going to accomplish something, and reading up the tree answers the question of why you are engaged in a particular program or seeking particular intermediate results. Perhaps because a democracy, even a stable one, is composed of dynamic processes which are highly variable, it is a difficult concept to dissect and determine the causes behind it. As a result, some sections of the framework are more definitional than causal. In other words, lower level results may simply reflect aspects of the higher result, rather than the sub-results necessary to reach that higher result...The complex and dynamic nature of democratization also makes target setting challenging. Often it is not clear how much change should be expected from a certain level of activity, nor the rate of change. (USAID 1998, p.3)

Therefore, USAID was careful to specify that performance evaluation based on these new indicators was primarily to serve as a device for evaluating whether USAID DG activities succeeded in making a positive contribution to definitional components of democracy, not whether such activities led to state-level democratic development. This is a significant admission from the primary agency tasked with promoting democracy abroad. The academic community so often assumes that the democracy community takes a megalomaniac approach to assistance; whereas this admission indicates much to the contrary – USAID is at least formally more modest than so often assumed.

This is further evidenced by the care USAID took in the development of the framework to differentiate between three levels of goals and objectives: “strategic objectives,” “intermediate results,” and “activity indicators.” (USAID 1998, p. 2) The strategic objectives are “Used by a mission to manage for results by tracking performance toward the most ambitious objective upon which it expects to have a material effect.” (1998, p.2) For example, the “Effective Justice Sector Institutions” strategic objective is evaluated against an indicator such as, “Average time for case disposition.” (1998, p.2) In contrast, intermediate results are, “Used by a mission to manage for results by tracking performance toward lower level objectives. For example, “Increased Transparency in Justice Sector Institutions” results can be evaluated against an indicator such as, “Percentage of court cases open to the public.” Finally, activity indicators are, “Used by a mission to track implementation of a specific program’s activities.” For example, the “Training of legal assistants” activity can be measured by an indicator such as the “number of legal assistants trained.” (1998, p.2)

Notably, USAID was also careful to explain that data used to measure indicators must be reliable/replicable and valid. The 1998 handbook devotes a chapter to explaining what type of

data is reliable and valid, how to use scales and indices, and when the use of qualitative information is appropriate. The details of its directives in this regard reflect sound scientific practices.

With the George W. Bush Administration came another effort to improve upon the performance evaluation practices of the democracy assistance community. With the Administration's increased emphasis on democracy assistance following President Bush's second inaugural address and its efforts to establish functioning democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan, came increased attention on the efficacy of such endeavors. In addition, newly appointed Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was immediately appalled by the lack of coordination among U.S. democracy assistance donor agencies and especially the inability of these agencies to explain how much money was being spent on which activities. This lack of accountability was brought to light in a Congressional hearing in which Secretary Rice was unable to answer a question regarding the amount of taxpayer dollars that the United States spends on democracy assistance. When she returned to State and sought to collect the numbers and report back to Congress, she was unable to do so, due to inconsistent categorization of such activities and lack of coordination between country and regional offices in this regard. (Hyman, 2008)

Her vision of "transformational diplomacy" and frustration over lack of accountability quickly gave rise to an unprecedented reorganization effort that brought USAID under the central management of the State Department's newly created Director of Foreign Assistance position (without Congressional debate). The Director would be a direct report of the Secretary and therefore referred to simply as "F." The Director would also act, secondarily, as the USAID administrator. Secretary Rice charged F with the task of developing a coordinated system to

track and monitor foreign assistance expenditures and activities. This system became known as the “F-Process.” As former USAID Director of the Office of Democracy and Governance notes, through this new centralized evaluation process, “ ‘All spigots’ of foreign assistance would be coordinated with one another and also with diplomacy and defense.” Whatever other purposes development assistance may have addressed in the past, it would now become a direct instrument of national security.” (2008, p.1)

The “F-Process” built upon the USAID Center for Democracy and Governance 1998 evaluation framework discussed above. In contrast to the new F-Process, the 1998 framework was developed for USAID-specific use and was intended to serve as a “guide” for evaluation and reporting; further, the objectives, results and indicators were intended to serve as examples only. Country offices were advised to develop their own objectives, results, and indicators as they deemed appropriate for their particular DG programs. In addition, members of Congress and cabinet secretaries of other agencies tacked hundreds of pet projects in the form of earmarks onto foreign assistance appropriations bills that were evaluated with even less rigor and consistency. The result was rampant inconsistency among country office evaluations and difficulty in deriving comparative or holistic assessments of U.S. DG work.

The F-Process sought to correct for such inconsistency in all USAID assistance areas, including DG by developing a set of uniform categories and indicators across sectors, regions, and U.S. donor agencies (especially across USAID and the Department of State’s Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Bureau). All DG work was required to be categorized along these pre-defined lines and measured by these pre-determined indicators. Unlike the 1998 USAID framework, the F-Process framework would not serve simply as an example but as mandated evaluation instructions to allow for consistent reporting across sectors and countries. The

framework defined the “universe of (presumptively transformational) activities that can be funded. Conversely, and activity that is not credibly within one of these objectives, program areas, program elements, and sub-elements cannot be funded...” (Hyman, 2008 p.6) The framework was to be implemented over time, and rolled out on a trial basis beginning in 2006.

Specifically, the F-Process framework provided a list of strategic objectives: Peace and Security, Governing Justly and Democratically, Investing in people, Economic Growth, and Humanitarian Assistance (Department of State, 2007). Democracy assistance falls under the “Governing Justly and Democratically” category and comprises a small portion of the total USAID foreign assistance budget.

The framework’s strategic objectives have been divided into programmatic categories and sub-categories, called “elements” and “sub-elements.” These elements and sub-elements of assistance were also matched with categories of countries for which they were deemed appropriate: Restrictive, Rebuilding, Developing, Transforming, and Sustaining Partnership. Only elements and sub-elements that have been previously deemed appropriate for a given category of country can be assisted in a country of that type. (Department of State, 2007). As Hyman notes,

The purpose of the five kinds of objectives (and their subsidiary program areas and elements), together with their associated assistance, is to help move a country up the ladder from Restrictive or Rebuilding to Developing, from Developing to Transforming, and from Transforming to Partnering. A fully transformed world would consist entirely of economically comfortable, healthy, educated citizens living with free markets in democratic countries, which together form a single, peaceful, secure international community of

Sustaining Partnership countries. Getting to that admittedly utopian world is the purpose of transformational development. (Hyman, 2008, p.7)

Specifically, the major elements that can be funded under the “Governing Justly and Democratically” objective include:

1. Rule of Law and Human Rights: Constitutions, Laws and Legal Systems; Judicial Independence; Justice System; and Human Rights.
2. Good Governance: Legislative Function and Processes; Public Sector Executive Function; Local Government and Decentralization; Anti-Corruption Reforms; and Governance of the Security Sector
3. Political Competition and Consensus-Building: Consensus-Building Processes; Elections and Political Processes; Political Parties; Civic Participation;
4. Civil Society: Civic Participation; Media Freedom and Freedom of Information

The framework’s strategic objectives and elements are then matched to indicators of program outputs. The Governing Justly and Democratically objective includes a list of definitions and indicators that is sixty-six pages long. One of several such pre-identified indicators of the Civil Society-Media Freedom and Freedom of Information element, for example, is, “Number of media outlets that received USG [U.S. Government]-supported training to promote financial sustainability.” (Department of State, 2008b, p.63) A definition is then provided for this indicator, “Media outlets are private individual TV, radio, print or Internet media companies that produce news and informational programming. Training is participation

in a USG sponsored event focused on financial sustainability and can be for any length of time.” (Department of State, 2008b, p.63) A rationale is then provided for the indicator, “The indicator measures the output of USG assistance programs designed to improve the financial health and viability of independent media, which is central to preserving editorial independence and is an important component of overall media freedom.” (Department of State, 2008b, p.63) The unit of measurement is identified, in this case as, “Number of media outlets” that received such training. (Department of State, 2008b, p.63) It is noted that a higher number of media outlets trained is an indicator of change for the better for this element. The indicators document also notes acceptable sources of data for each particular indicator. In this case, data can be collected from the USAID country office, USAID annual reports or from what USAID calls “implementing partners,” or grantees that are U.S. or foreign NGOs that administer the program in a recipient state.

Other examples of indicators include: “Number of people [disaggregated by sex and age] who received internet access as a result of USG funded programs;” “Number of independent and democratic trade/labor unions supported by USG to promote international core labor standards;” “Number of electoral administration procedures and systems strengthened with USG assistance...[e.g., indicated by a] budget increase for the electoral administration, [or] voter education provided in more languages;” and “Number of USG-assisted consensus processes resulting in an agreement.” (Department of State, 2008b, p.48, 53, 61, 66)

These examples reveal that the performance and evaluation approach taken recently by USAID, and actually since the 1998 framework, acknowledges the need for examination of the relationship between investment inputs and some sort of measurable outputs and results. Note however, that when linked together, the strategic objectives, intermediate results, and activity

indicators purposefully show correlation, not causation (although the optimistic hope is obviously causation).

This is in stark contrast to the rhetoric of Presidents reviewed in previous chapters, which states that if we promote democracy abroad, democratic development will occur and it will have a host of positive effects on American national security and economic interests. While presidential rhetoric makes questionable causal assumptions, it appears from USAID documentation that USAID management acknowledges that these are assumptions and admits that they cannot be proven. By design, USAID's performance evaluations consider whether a program actually conducted the assistance activities as designed and whether those activities were followed by improvement in one component of one sector of democratic institutions, and then whether that one relevant sector saw improvement. USAID assumes that as long as it successfully implements its programs and those programs are then followed by improvement, that it is accomplishing its strategic objectives. This is even though it formally admits that it cannot determine whether or not its DG assistance activities actually cause such progress. It is hopeful that it does.

That said, if one spends any time with USAID country DG officers or Washington administrators, it quickly becomes apparent that they are true believers in the causal link between assistance and democratic development. So, the formal evaluation process may seek to assess correlation instead of causation, but operatives assume and seek impact, at least over the long term. Many operatives are indeed fully cognizant of the decades democracy development can take, and do not expect to see large scale change on a short or even medium term basis. They view their work as a small investment that they hope will yield long term compounded results.

Hence, an evaluation framework is in place. Its most recent incarnation in the F-Process reflects state of the art evaluation methodology. However, it acknowledges that its theory of change is based on indeterminate causal mechanisms. This shortcoming will be addressed in depth later in this chapter. It will be suggested that the DG theory of change could better reflect causal mechanisms as an individual level theory. Beyond theoretical shortcomings, several questions remain regarding the efficacy and quality of evaluations that have been written based on this framework, as well as the degree to which such evaluations actually feed back into the decision-making process.

Under the Strategic and Operational Research Agenda (SORA), USAID commissioned a study by independent academic scholars to answer these questions and suggest room for improvement, as a follow-up to a similar 2001 study. This study group was named the “Committee on Evaluation of USAID Democracy Assistance Programs, National Research Council.” (2008) It examined USAID evaluation and research practices and found that such USAID practices gather “valuable information for project tracking and management” but do not provide a basis for impact analysis, because they lack the “baseline measures” and “control groups” necessary for attributing causation to change. (2008, p. 1) What the current practices fail to do is to determine what may have occurred without assistance. (2008) This is not surprising given the fact that the purpose of the evaluation framework was not impact evaluation.

It must be noted that impact evaluation was phased out almost entirely by USAID in 1995, because it found such evaluations to be too costly, in terms of resources and time, to be conducted on all projects. A shift was made toward evaluation only upon request by management and, in particular, “process evaluations,” or those which track project spending and implementation, not impact. These types of evaluations also fall under “performance

monitoring” as called for by the 1993 Government Performance and Results Act. This includes goal setting, developing measures, and results assessment (Committee on Evaluation, 2008, p.53-54).

The 1998 framework and 2006 F-process were not developed to improve impact evaluation practices, but instead improve upon performance monitoring processes. As noted by the Committee on Evaluation, “The results of this process are that USAID DG missions spend a large amount of time and money acquiring and transmitting the most basic accounting-type information on their projects (... ‘output’ evaluations); far less time and money are spent in determining which projects really work and how efficient they are at producing desired results.” (2008, p.57)

That said, outside of the F-process, USAID has been seeking to determine a means to assess impact. This was the primary purpose of commissioning the SORA 2001 and 2008 studies of evaluation practices, as well as the 2007 and 2008 quantitative studies on democracy assistance effects (Finkel, et. al). Again, USAID is acknowledging that they have yet to develop an appropriate means to assess the impact of democracy assistance and is continually seeking to find a way to do so. In addition, USAID continues to provide grants to independent contracting agencies, such as Management Systems International (MSI), Chemonics, and Democracy International. These evaluations are based on in-country interviews, surveys and analyses of political developments. Their various methodologies reflect the objectives-results orientation of the F-Process, but also devote significant attention to qualitative evaluation – especially regarding country needs, political environment and national democratic development indicators.

Combined, the F-Process and the upon-request independent studies comprise the USAID evaluation approach. The results of evaluations are then considered in light of large scale

democratic developments or “strategic objectives” at the state level. However, USAID program staff have voiced concerns that despite this elusive causal link, they are required to collect and report state-level data on democracy development in the same evaluations in which they report on the implementation, outputs and results of their democracy assistance programs – hence, they are concerned that these state-level indicators will be used by management to determine program efficacy. (Committee on Evaluation 2008)

There appears to be a disconnect between the USAID admission that its evaluation frameworks do not examine large-scale impact and the F-process requirement to report on state and sector level indicators of democratic development. This author has yet to find any documentation of USAID directives for management to evaluate program success based on state and sector level indicators, despite understandable program-staff fears that this is being done. On the one hand program staff are required to report on state level democracy indicators but then those indicators do not seem to influence managerial decisions. The causal link may be assumed, but it seems that such indicators are used more as an assessment tool to determine whether the need remains in a country for continued DG Assistance or whether developments in democracy (regardless of program impact) warrant a shift in programmatic change for a given country. This is more likely the case, given comments by senior management staff, such as the former USAID Chief of Strategic Planning and Research Division, Margaret Sarles, who suggests,

What seems to be lacking in democracy and governance programmes, as opposed to [agriculture and health] areas of development, is a set of middle-level indicators that have two characteristics: (a) we can agree that they are linked to important characteristics of

democracy; and (b) we can plausibly attribute a change in those indicators to a USAID democracy and governance programme. It seems clear that we need to develop a methodology that is able to detect a reasonable, plausible relationship between particular democracy activities and processes of democratic change. (Sarles 2007: 52)

Further, studies have found that performance monitoring is conducted more as an accounting process, to make sure that taxpayer dollars are spent as intended by program goals and in line with strategic objectives. As Hyman notes, “The entire process suffers from a kind of H& R Block mentality...But accountancy is not the only value, and foreign assistance is not a tax return.” (2008, p.24) Although one of the benefits of this approach is thought to be the quality, comparability, and accessibility of the quantifiable data it yields; past efforts to develop systems to track and analyze the data have been unsuccessful. (Hyman, 2008) So often what has happened in the past is that evaluations that are used to monitor performance are then filed in archives. Then data within the archived evaluations was not made available to researchers or even agency staff (Lapp-Wincek and Blue 2001; Committee on Evaluation, 2008). Hence democracy assistance program evaluations in all their incarnations thus far have been used more as an auditing tool. The data they supply is rarely, if at all, used for impact assessments and they do not necessarily factor into management decisions regarding funding allocations.

Hyman goes so far as to contend that the program Washington review process at State and USAID, even prior to the F process, had an often “artificial-quality.” (2008, p.11) He attributes this to understaffing and the great volume of country-mission analyses and recommendations. He contends that this reality has only been exacerbated under the F-process and the centralization of review, by an even smaller staff within the Director’s office. It has also

been exacerbated by the bureaucratic politics of the development of the F-process, in which, Hyman contends, every person with an interest in a given program made sure the evaluation framework was structured such that their program would be allowed to receive continued funding. (2008) Therefore, the framework was developed to support personal interests, under the guise of strategic thinking.

It must also be noted that USAID's Center for Development and Evaluation Information (CDIE) was eliminated and its staff were moved to the State Department's Director of Foreign Assistance office in 2006, as Secretary Rice sought to centralize oversight of DG activities. In so doing, she eliminated the primary center for learning and discussion of program impact, which historically "had conferences of DG officers to discuss not only CDIE-sponsored evaluations but also research and report on DG assistance undertaken by NGOs, academics and other donors. These activities appear to have significantly atrophied" since CDIE was disbanded (Committee on Evaluation, 2008, p.65-66).

In all, the current USAID and State Department democracy assistance evaluation requirements appear to track assistance spending, program implementation/inputs, short term outputs, and state-level indicators of democracy and governance.. However, there is no consideration under the evaluation framework of *how* aid is expected to yield democratic development. In effect, the U.S. democracy assistance evaluation framework is missing a sound causal theory, or what the evaluation field calls, a "logic of change model."

The National Endowment for Democracy

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) has a much smaller operating budget than USAID. It currently spends approximately US\$100 million per year on its democracy assistance programs and grants. (Carothers, 2009) It receives money from annual U.S. congressional appropriations, which it then distributes in the form of core grants to its four core institutes (NDI, IRI, CIPE, and Solidarity) and discretionary grants to indigenous NGOs within developing democracies. In addition, the NED devotes funds to research and publications (including the *Journal of Democracy* and edited volumes on various topics related to worldwide democratic development).

The NED does not, however publish evaluations of its grantees' programs. Evaluation reports are instead conducted by the grantees themselves, in two types – this has been consistent for many years. The first is within proposals for grant continuance, quarterly reports for discretionary grants, semi-annual reports for core grants and closeout reports at the end of each grant term. The second evaluation type includes lessons learned case studies by the core institutes. It is left to the discretion of the core institutes to determine what cases (countries and programs) should be examined and to apply for grants to fund these studies. There is therefore no methodological consistency across core institutes in lessons learned studies. Case selection is at worst image driven – when successful cases are selected to improve the institutes' image. Selection is at times driven by within-institute bureaucratic politics, in which organization leaders compete to draw attention to their pet projects or to deflect attention from controversial projects. At best, cases are selected based on availability of project staff who can write well on best practices and important lessons. Never are the cases selected scientifically, to provide a

representative sample or to establish control groups for the purpose of establishing a clear causal relationship between programs and democratic development in recipient states.

Beyond the public relations and political dimensions of such studies, their quality suffers from the lack of research staff in each institute. There is great debate within institutes as to the merits of research studies, as they see themselves as “do-tanks” instead of “think-tanks.” They often view research as a distraction from the important work of assisting democracy abroad. As a result, it is left to individual staffers to champion the merits of studying lessons learned and develop grant proposals.

The proposals are then reviewed by regional directors and senior leadership. If deemed politically safe, they are then submitted to NED (as well as USAID) to request funding. There is then often internal debate within NED as to the research qualifications of the core institute staff tasked with conducting the research and regarding the merits of the study.

Because of the unscientific approach, inconsistency, and rarity of these NED lessons learned studies, the NED evaluation activities that deserve most attention here lie within the grant continuance proposal and periodic reporting processes, including the final evaluation reports. The initial grant proposal sets the standard for a program’s subsequent reports. All proposals are required to provide a narrative on the background and political environment of a country, justify the need for a program, outline program goals and objectives, discuss proposed activities including if/how in-country sub-grantees will participate, and identify expected program results.

Grantees are instructed to write objectives that are “SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, and Realistic within the Timeframe of the program.” (NED 2009, p. 3) Helping to advance democratic practices, for example is not specific enough. An acceptable objective,

under these standards, is something like, “To strengthen the organizational capabilities of local civic groups.” (NED 2009, p.2)

In each NED grant proposal the evaluation plan is required to include “an evaluation point under each objective (evidence of the achievement of the objective, also called an indicator) and a method of measurement.” (NED 2009). For example, an indicator of strengthened capabilities of local civic groups could be, “Civic groups compile databases of grassroots members” or “Civic groups develop communications strategy to coordinate networks of activists.” The NED acknowledges that the immediate reporting requirements upon program completion by necessity make the evaluation one of short-term achievements. The NED also requests that grantees not confound achievements with program activities. In addition, measures of achievement may be qualitative in nature.

Once a program is funded and assistance activities commence, grantee are required to provide quarterly or semi-annual reports. These are required to include a review of program objectives, a discussion of activities that have been conducted since the last report and a discussion of program results and short-term impact, as measured against the grantee’s pre-determined evaluation points.

At the close of a program’s grant period, a final evaluation report is submitted. This report mirrors the initial grant proposal. It includes a statement of the problem being addressed by the program; a summary of activities (including participant lists, training session agendas, trainee surveys, etc.); an evaluation of the program as measured against the evaluation points; and an analysis of impact (including discussion of what program participants went on to achieve, lessons learned, and recommendations for future programs, etc.). Each evaluation report is relatively short, averaging an estimated ten pages per one year of programming.

Hence, the NED evaluation requirements are in essence a qualitative cousin of USAID's F-process. However, unlike USAID's process, the NED allows an open universe of program options, objectives and indicators - so long as they are in line with the NED mission. Grantees are left to their own discretion to identify country needs and programs that may assist countries in getting those needs met. Further, evaluation reports vary drastically in detail and quality. Some provide insightful analysis of a program's short-term achievements in the context of longer term objectives, whereas others focus more on summarizing program activities at the expense of critical analysis. It is also very important to note that grantees consider the reporting process a step in securing future funding. Because NED allocates a one quarter of the core funds it appropriates to each institute, the review process merely determines within-institute allocation (not whether or not funds will be granted to the institutes).

Therefore, although the NED leadership encourages critical analysis and even demands it in proposal review sessions with core institute staff (which are held before proposals are submitted to the board of directors for approval), there is great incentive to paint programs in the most positive light possible. Very often final evaluations are viewed by grantee staff as a red-tape hassle that is required before they can return to their real work of helping aspiring democrats. The evaluations, therefore, most often include a small amount of critical thinking, while the bulk of the narratives take the form of glowing reports of accomplishments. Little attention is paid in reporting to adverse affects of programs, although this is at times addressed in the oral review sessions.

To the NED's credit, the review process does take into account the evaluation reports and is very efficient. All proposals and reports are cleared through regional staff and then the evaluation team under the Vice President for Programs, Evaluation and Planning. Critical questions are aired and grantees are given the opportunity to defend program decisions or make relevant revisions in proposals for grant renewals by the second proposal review session before each meeting of the board

of directors. The efficiency of the system is due in part to good organization but also, largely, to the relatively small operating budget and the small number of core institutes that participate in the system. Unlike USAID, the NED has a limited number of grantees with which it works, even when discretionary grants to in-country grantees are taken into account.

Evaluation To What End?

The above review of the democracy assistance program evaluation practices of USAID, State, and NED reveal contrasting findings in regards to the relationship between evaluation and decision-making. To put it in terms of the evaluation field, the feedback loop between evaluations and decision-making is minimal at USAID and inconsistent due to a subjective process at the NED.

Secretary Rice's reforms have brought about a valuable increase in accountability, but not in learning and improvement at USAID. (Hyman, 2008) This shortcoming is attributed to the centralization of the review process, in which micromanagement of a great volume of reports by a small number of senior staff make the process superficial. Decisions regarding allocation of funds appear to reflect the political priorities of the administration and the pet projects of congress via earmarks.

The program review process examines the political climate in a country, the extent to which funds were spent according to initial program plans, and the demands of elected officials – not a thorough analysis of program reports written in accordance with the F-Process. Hence, the feedback loop between evaluations and decision-making at USAID is minimal. Currently, evaluations are used for more accountability purposes and analyses of managerial effectiveness

than for decision-making based on analyses of the relationship between assistance and democratic development in recipient states.

In contrast, evaluations contained within quarterly and semiannual reports as well as final evaluation reports factor significantly into the NED decisions regarding grant allocations. It is important to note, however that this applies more to interim internal management decisions than to the final decisions made by the endowment's board of directors.

The office of the NED Vice President for Programs and Evaluation thoughtfully weighs the quality of evaluation reports and often demands improvement on reports written by grantee staff. Further, in quarterly and semi-annual review sessions the NED evaluation staff discusses in detail cost effectiveness of programs in light of three key factors: changing political contexts; effectiveness in terms of reaching those who need and can benefit from assistance the most; and ensuring that opportunities through partnerships with local NGOs in recipient countries are maximized by careful selection of partners based on organizational capacity and in-country political ramifications. Once these factors have been considered, grantees are often directed to change program plans and partners. Program reports and evaluations are revised accordingly. Upon approval by the NED evaluation staff, reports are sent to the board of directors for review.

The NED board of directors then has final say in funding allocations. Often concerns they raise reflect their own interests (less so in terms of personal gain, but instead in terms of each member's own subjective country, partner NGO, and program affinities). Some members advocate increased spending on civil society and media programs or governance programs, while others advocate increased spending in countries in which they have the greatest expertise. Other members weigh most heavily American national security or political concerns. In all, the decisions they make are highly subjective and are not based on evaluations written by grantees.

However, most often, the board approves allocation of funds to programs which have been recommended by the NED evaluation staff.

Therefore, evaluations do feed into the decision-making process at the NED. However, such feedback is tempered by the subjectivity of the board of directors as well as by the inconsistent quality of the evaluations themselves.

In sum, USAID employs quantitative evaluations in pursuit of accountability without integrating their narratives into decisions about program efficacy, while the NED thoroughly examines qualitative evaluations and factors them into their fund allocation decision-making process. That said, both USAID and the NED evaluations admittedly focus on outputs and short-term outcomes instead of on medium to long term impact on democratic development in recipient states.

CHAPTER 6

A NEW THEORY OF DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE

On the one hand, scientific studies of the relationship between democracy assistance and democratic development in recipient countries tell us that democracy assistance is not effective. The lone exception establishes a quantitative correlation between democracy assistance and democratic development but fails to establish causation, and pays little attention to causal mechanisms. On the other hand, practitioner evaluations which argue that democracy assistance programs make a positive contribution to democratic development in recipient states focus only on short term, small scale results -- again, without careful examination of causal mechanisms.

What is missing from both the literature and practitioner evaluations is a well developed theory of change regarding how assistance can impact democratic development. As examined in the chapter 4, theories about democratic development abound. Some of the most famous examples include Rostow's sequencing theory (1960), O'Donnell, Schmitter, Whitehead, and Linz's transitology theories (1986), and Diamond's analysis of the necessary components of liberal democracy (1999). However, the way that democracy assistance is thought to impact democratic development appears unexamined -- there seems to be no theory that thoroughly explains the relationship between democracy assistance and democratic development. Therefore, this chapter will develop a theory of democracy assistance.

Taking Stock: Operational Assumptions and an Implied Theory of Change

The assumptions underlying the democracy community's theory of change have yet to be thoroughly examined. What exists within the democracy community is a theory of change that follows from conclusions made in the democracy development literature on how democracy develops (apart from assistance).

Put in terms of the field of evaluation, a "theory of change logic model" has been developed for democracy assistance, but only some of its underlying assumptions have been tested (or even identified). The evaluation practices of USAID/State and the NED are based on similar "program logic models" built upon an incomplete "theory of change logic model." This will be discussed further in a moment, but first an explanation of logic models is warranted here.

In the field of evaluation, a "theory of change logic model" identifies the strategies that will be employed to achieve expected results and why those strategies are expected to achieve the intended results. A "program logic model" identifies the process by which the strategy should achieve the intended results. The following figure, adapted from Knowlton and Phillips illustrates both types of models (2009, p.42-45).

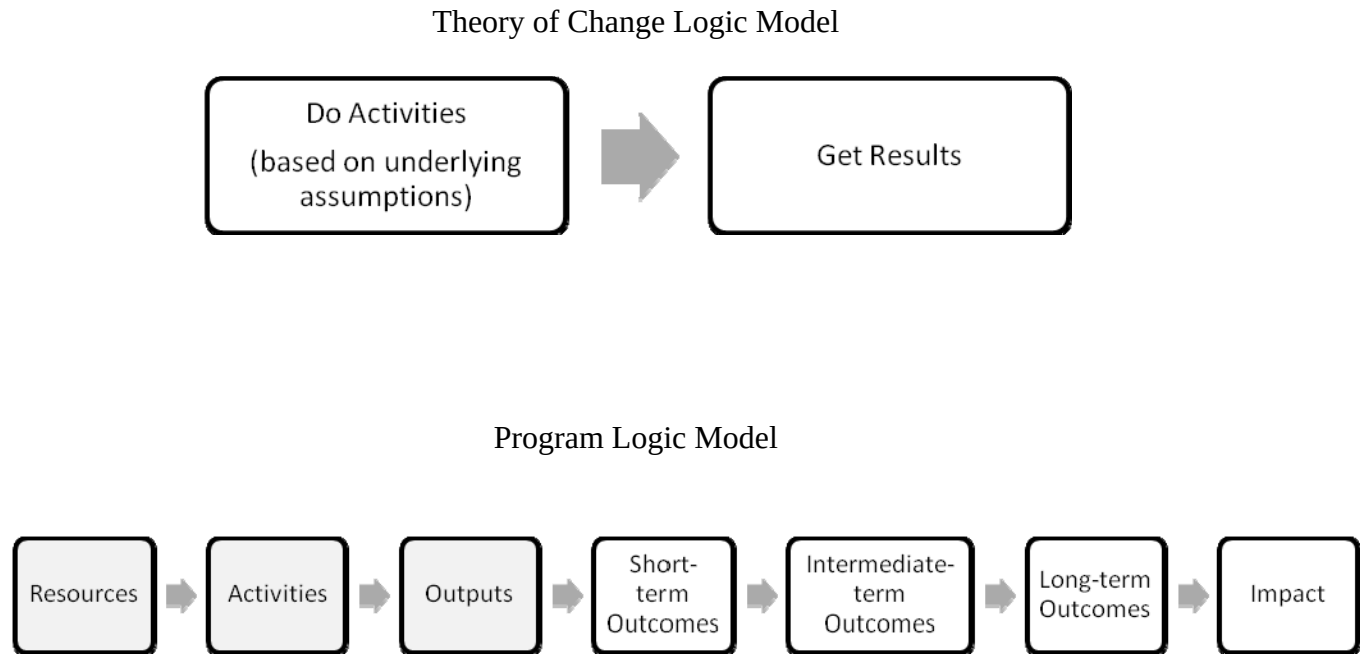


Figure 6.1 Evaluation Logic Models

There can be multiple sets of activities that comprise a strategy aimed at achieving ultimate results. In the case of democracy promotion, these activities include: democracy development assistance aimed at improving upon institutions, organizations and policies in recipient states that maximize freedom, opportunity and quality of life (as provided primarily by the NED, State and USAID); military intervention aimed at regime change and post-conflict reconstruction (as provided primarily by the Department of Defense); and diplomatic initiatives in the form of dialogue, exchange programs, information, carrots, and sticks aimed at policy change and regime change (as provided primarily by the Department of State). Development assistance, military intervention, and diplomatic initiatives seek to achieve democratic development results based on different theories of change.

This study will examine but one of these -- the relationship between assistance and development. The democracy assistance community evaluates its work according to a program logic model that is identical to the one depicted above, however on the outcome sides of the model, it primarily examines short-term outcomes. It rarely examines intermediate outcomes, long-term outcomes or impact. The community does seek to account for state-level change in democratic development, but does not make the case that such development is the long term impact of its work (as discussed in great detail above).

Similarly, the democracy community's theory of change logic model skips important pieces -- namely clear identification and examination of the assumptions that underlie its strategy. Therefore, a detailed theory of change logic model upon which democracy assistance is based will be developed here, and is illustrated in Figure 6.2, below.

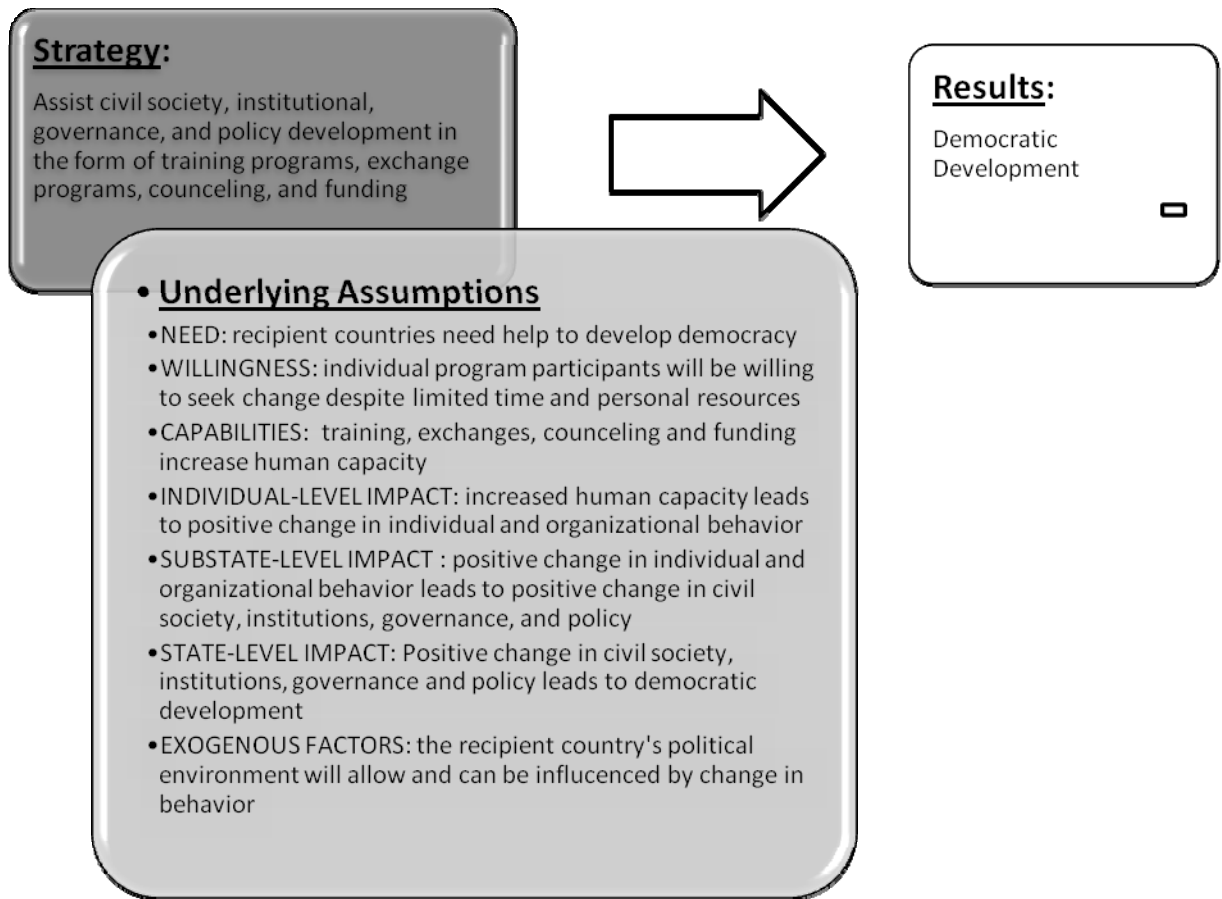


Figure 6.2 Democracy Assistance Theory of Change Logic Model

In essence, the United States provides assistance in the form of training programs, exchange programs, counseling and funding to states in which it wants to see greater democratic development. It is believed that this strategy is likely to yield the desired results based on several critical assumptions. Some of these assumptions are supported by research and others are not. Each will be considered in turn.

NEED: *Recipient countries need help to develop democracy.* This assumption is not supported by the literature or by program evaluations. States have transitioned to democracy and consolidated democratic governance throughout history without U.S. democracy assistance – the U.S. itself, France, and Canada are cases in point.

That said, the evidence does support the fact that at least some individuals and organizations within recipient states want assistance. Participation in non-military assistance programs is entirely voluntary. USAID, State, and the NED only provide training and counseling to individuals who request or express interest in it. Each organization conducts an assessment that, in part, gauges potential recipient interest and receptivity to aid. If individuals and organizations within potential recipient states are not interested in receiving training, counseling, or funding, then donor organizations deem it unwise to grant it.

However, only a small number of individuals need express interest to bring assistance to recipient states. So long as they are positioned in a civic organization, political party, or government in a way that they have potential to exert influence for change toward democratic development, then donor organizations deem them good candidates for assistance. The same applies to individuals who are not well positioned in organizations but who are members of key groups deemed critical in transitions to democracy, such as youth and women. The majority of a country's officials and citizens could be against democratic assistance, but so long as a well positioned or key group is interested in receiving it, there is a good chance it will be given (as is the case for election assistance in villages in China and training programs in East Timor).

While the premise that recipient countries need assistance to transition to democracy is based on a faulty assumption, it is true that democracy assistance is only given to individuals and

groups within recipient countries who voluntarily participate in assistance programs – be it for personal gain or to learn how to help their country develop democratically.

Alternatively, perhaps the *need* premise under which the democracy community operates is more accurately framed as follows: that states need help for faster democratic development. If so, this premise is somewhat substantiated by the literature. The most reliable study on the subject indicates that states which receive USAID democracy assistance are likely to make greater progress toward democratic development over the course of one to fifteen years than are countries that do not receive assistance. (Finkel, et. al 2008) According to Finkel, et. al., assistance appears to be correlated with a faster track to democratic development. Hence, if the premise for providing democracy assistance is that recipient states need help to increase the speed of democratic development, then it is supported by one study.

Further, if the U.S. provides democracy assistance because states need such assistance to progress toward democracy faster, then consideration of the ramifications of pushing for fast transitions must be considered. The question must be asked: Do fast leaps in democratic development lead to long term democratic consolidation? If not, then deductive logic leads the theory of change to fall apart from the first premise. However, answering this question is beyond the scope this study.

2. CAPABILITIES: *training, exchanges, counseling and funding increase human capacity.*

This assumption is widely supported by the literature on education and management as well as program survey results, even when varying quality of programs is taken into account.

It is a fact that education makes a difference, even though people likely to succeed self-select themselves into post-primary school education programs. The difference here is that this is not medical school – people can and often do succeed without it.

3. WILLINGNESS: *Individual program participants are likely to be willing to seek change despite limited time, personal resources, and negative personal consequences.* The willingness component is essential if change in human capacity is likely to lead to change in political behavior.

This assumption has yet to be supported by the literature or by program evaluations. Further examination is needed to determine if this is so. What percent of those trained, counseled and funded proceed to engage in activities aimed at democratic development in their countries? If that percent is low, and they have the capabilities to act, then is failure to act a result of lack of willingness or other factors exogenous to assistance (and how is willingness influenced by exogenous factors such as political ramifications, perceived likelihood for success given political context, etc)? Program follow-up surveys would need to be conducted to determine this. What percent is necessary for advancing democratic development? Is one willing actor enough? The cases of Poland, Liberia and Ukraine suggest that this could so, as long as they are charismatic leaders.

4. SUB-STATE-LEVEL IMPACT: *increased individual capabilities combined with willingness to act will lead to individual behavior that will improve civil society, institutions, policy, and governance over the short term at minimum.*

This assumption *may be* supported by the literature and by program evaluations. It is not entirely clear whether such improvement is assumed to occur immediately or over the long term. The democracy community focuses most on short term improvements, but this is likely due to the need for ease of reporting instead of due to the fact that only short term impact is expected (NOTE: they examine “long term impact” as discussed earlier in terms of change in sub-state level indicators, not necessarily as a result of their work).

The democracy community appears not to examine whether or not individual participants continue to engage in the desired behavior over an extended period of time. It does not seem that sustained individual behavior is a critical assumption of assistance operations.⁶ Instead, it is assumed that many short to medium-term improvements in each area will lead to a positive democracy development trajectory over the long term (the next assumption), regardless of whether those short term improvements are made by the same, individual program participants over time, or by new participants or non-participants that are inspired by the behavior of others.

Further, variables exogenous to democracy assistance, willingness, and capabilities affect how much change in behavior is likely to lead to positive impact in each area. Most important are perhaps the willingness of the government to allow behavioral change and the strength of each component of democratic governance prior to behavioral change. Unrelated or indirectly related political events, as well as political culture, economic development, international influences, and natural events all also influence the degree to which change in behavior can affect positive change in each component.

⁶ Extreme cases of assistance that affirm the long term individual behavior assumption include: Nelson Mandela, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Victor Yushchenko. However, these individuals appear to be rare exceptions.

5. STATE-LEVEL IMPACT: Short term changes in civil society, institutions, governance and policy compound over time to lead to overall democratic development. This assumption is supported by the democratic development literature, but only over the long term. Again, variables exogenous to democracy assistance, willingness, and capabilities impact the compounded state effects from change in each of these areas over time. Key exogenous variables include political culture, the nature of each of these areas prior to assistance, other international influences, economic development, etc.

Specifying the Implied Causal Mechanisms of Democracy Assistance

Once these five assumptions have been identified, it becomes clear that the causal mechanisms that form the theory of change for democracy assistance impact can be simplified as follows. Democracy assistance as it is currently designed only aims to impact individuals' capabilities, in terms of resources, education, experience and aptitude. However, individuals' capabilities alone do not make for democratic development. Individuals' capabilities, individuals' willingness to pursue change, and domestic and international politics all work together to determine whether a country will develop democratically.

To put it in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions: individual capabilities and willingness to act are necessary, but not sufficient conditions for democratic development, and democracy assistance is aimed at increasing only one of these necessary conditions: individual capabilities.

Further, individual capabilities and willingness have an interdependent relationship with not only each other, but also with domestic politics. In essence, there is a circular relationship

between individual capabilities, willingness, and reform-minded behavior on the one hand, and political culture, history, institutional structures, organizational politics, bureaucratic politics, policy outcomes, and economic variables, as well as international variables beyond assistance that impact domestic politics on the other hand. Each of these variables interacts and influences each other, and ultimately together cause changes in state-level democratic development over the long term. This theory is illustrated in Figure 6.3, below.

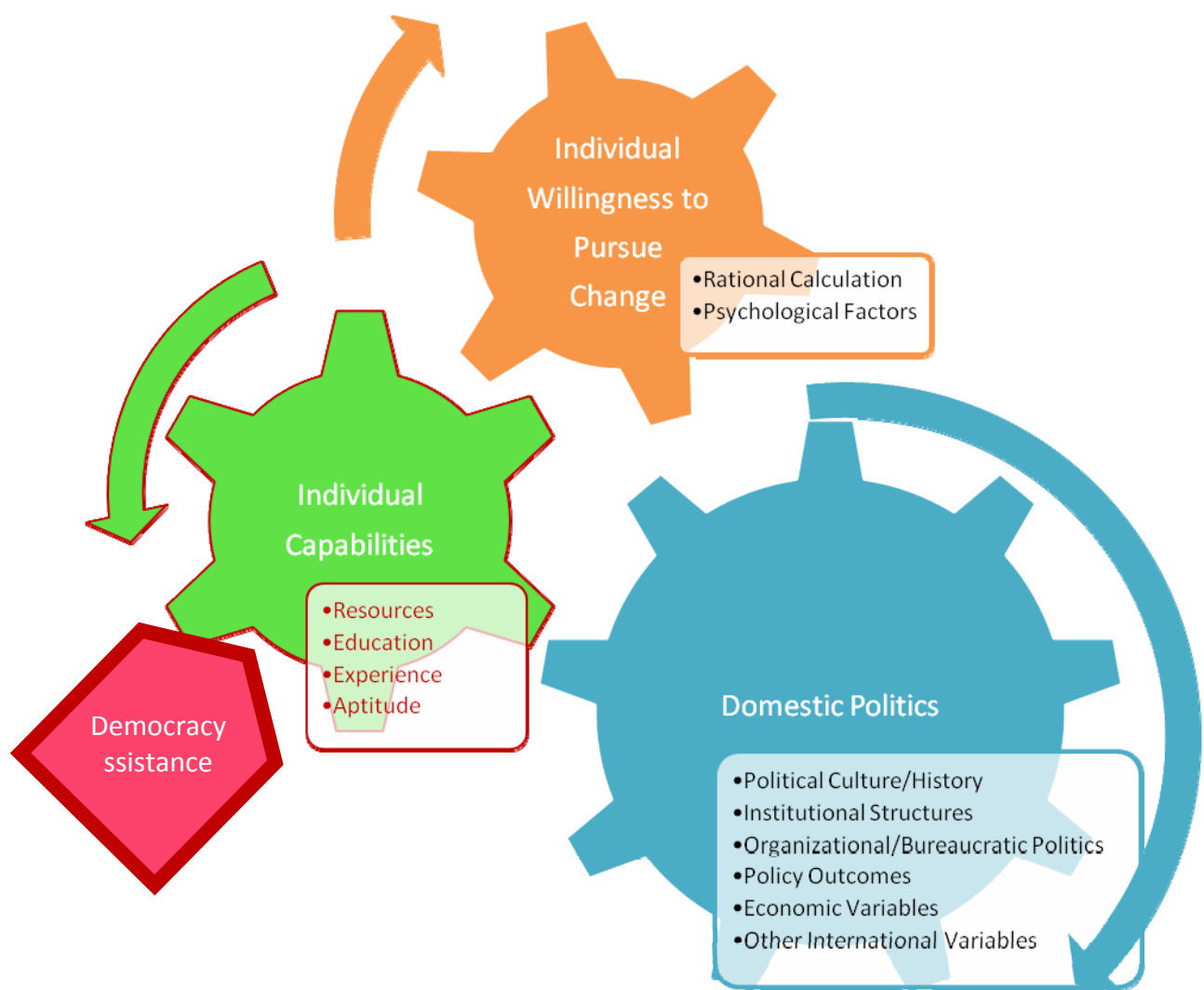


Figure 6.3 The Mechanics of Democracy Assistance Impact

Opportunity and Willingness in the Literature

Given the complexity of the mechanics of democratic development, and the fact that democracy assistance only aims to directly improve upon the single part of individual capabilities, it is no wonder that the community has yet to determine the extent to which it has an impact on democratic development in recipient states. Finkel, et. al., alone among political scientists, have found a correlation between USAID democracy assistance and democratic development in recipient states -- but causation has yet to be established. (2008) The development of a theory of change as outlined above is but one step toward the possibility of establishing causation.

Once the assumptions underlying the practice of providing democracy assistance have been identified and the theory of change explored, it becomes apparent that the complex operating theory implied in democracy assistance work can be parsimoniously explained by Most and Starr's "pre-theoretic framework" of opportunity and willingness. (1993) As Most and Starr note, their framework is derived from the Sproutian "ecological triad" that explains how the environment impacts individual behavior by informing or constraining decisions to determine not only what is possible given the environment in which the decision is being made, but also what is probable. (Sprout, 1956, 1965, 1968, 1969)

Most and Starr note that "entity-environment relationships based on possibilism and probabilism can be summarized by Russett's idea of 'menu'" (Most and Starr 1993, p. 28; Russett, 1972; Russett and Starr, 1985). In essence the idea is that an actor has a menu of options that are pre-determined by the restaurant. That menu constrains the possibilities. It is the structure that constrains the actor's choice, but does not alone determine that choice. The

menu tells the actor what “opportunities” are possible. The probability that an actor will make a particular food selection is “affected through factors such as price, size of portion, side dishes, the restaurant’s reputation for certain meals, and other factors related to the motivations, tastes and values of the customer/decision maker.” (Most and Starr, 1993, p. 28)

However, an actor’s perception of the menu/opportunities, as well as of the other environmental factors, also affects the actor’s willingness to make a particular choice in what the Sprouts call “cognitive behaviorism.” As quoted by Most and Starr, this is “the simple and familiar principle that a person reacts to his milieu as he apperceives it – that is as he perceives and interprets it in light of past experience.” (Most and Starr 1993, p.28; Sprouts 1969, p.45)

“The argument that both opportunity and willingness must be taken into account in the study of international phenomena derives in part from the understanding that *all three* parts of the triad – entity, environment, entity-environment relationship – must be studied in order to cover all the jointly necessary conditions for explanation of phenomena.” (Most and Starr 1993, p. 29) Further, all levels of the environment must be taken into consideration: individual, state, and international. This is in contrast to Allison’s organizational and governmental politics models that only take into consideration domestic politics. It is also in contrast to, for example, Waltz’s argument that the structure of the international system is most important in determining international behavior. (Most and Starr 1993. p. 29).

Most and Starr use their theory of opportunity and willingness to explain why states fight each other. They contend that states must have both the opportunity and willingness to fight for war to be probable. A state must have the opportunity to initiate war, as determined by military capabilities, geographic proximity to the enemy state, possibilities for victory given alliance structures in the international system, etc. In addition, as state must have the willingness to

initiate war, as determined by past experiences, perception of the state of affairs, rational calculations of utility (the costs versus benefits of fighting), etc. Opportunity can make a state more willing to fight and willingness may lead states to develop the capabilities necessary to put up a good fight. Opportunity and willingness impact each other. (Most and Starr 1993, p. 29-46). Further, opportunity and willingness are both necessary conditions for war, but alone are not sufficient conditions for war. States will only go to war if they have both the opportunity and willingness to do so. (Most and Starr 1993, p. 47-67).

Connecting the Opportunity and Willingness Framework to Democracy Assistance

This same framework can be applied to the explanation of what is likely to make democracy assistance effective. Democracy assistance impact must be considered in light of environment, entity, and the environment-entity relationship, as well as on multiple levels of analysis. However, the primary focus of democracy assistance providers is opportunity and willingness.

Opportunity

As noted in earlier sections, states receive democracy assistance in the form of training, counseling, funding, and exchange programs. Each of these tactics is intended to increase the capabilities – or “opportunities” – of states in areas deemed definitional components of democratic development. More accurately, each of these tactics is aimed at increasing individual and ultimately organizational capabilities. Those capabilities, in term, are expected to help people develop their own democracies.

However, as Most and Starr explain, capabilities are only one contributing factor to opportunity (see the illustration of the factors that contribute to opportunity in Figure 6.4, below). International and domestic political structural factors also affect opportunity, including: economic development, domestic security, international security, historical experience with the pursuit of democratic development, political culture, bureaucratic politics, organizational politics, institutional structures, political events, the personalities of those in power, etc. In addition, personal environmental factors affect opportunity, such as: income, job, household dynamics, household structure, gender-specific cultural norms of behavior, geographic location, etc. Hence democracy assistance seeks to improve but one necessary element that determines state-level opportunity to develop components of democracy -- individual and ultimately organizational capabilities -- but, a host of other environmental factors determine how effective individuals can be when they seek to take advantage of their increased capabilities.

OPPORTUNITY:

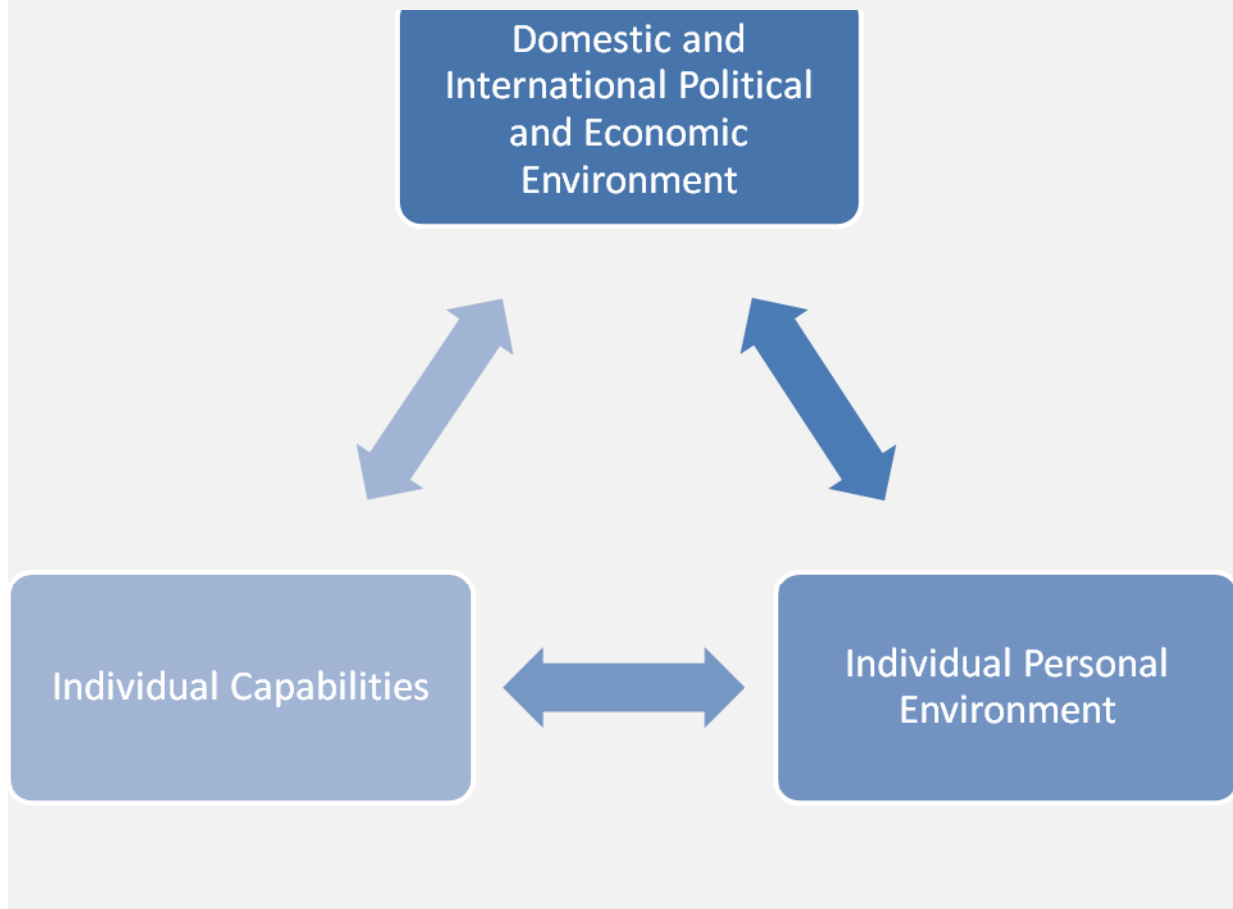


Figure 6.4 Individual Opportunity to Affect Democratic Development

Willingness

To the extent that democracy assistance increases capabilities and gives individuals confidence in their own abilities, it can also affect willingness to engage in activities that are thought to further the democratic development of their state. However, individual willingness to engage in pro-democracy activities is also greatly affected by perception – of opportunities, ramifications of action, utility of action, utility of democratic consolidation, etc. Further, perception is shaped by political culture and past experiences that individuals have had with pro-democracy behavior as well as that they have had collectively with democratic (or semi-democratic) systems.

In sum, willingness is the product of the interaction of opportunity, an individual's perception of the environment that surrounds him, and the calculation of the utility of action (see the illustration of the factors that contribute to willingness in Figure 6.5., below). As Most and Starr conceived it,

Willingness thus deals with the variety of (socio-) psychological, perceptual, informational and other processes by which humans perceive their environment. The work in this area covers all aspects of human choice, and the full range of international relations phenomena. These are the processes by which decision makers *recognize* opportunities, and then translate those opportunities into alternatives that are weighed in some manner; willingness means the decision to choose among those alternatives and accept the costs and benefits accompanying that option. (1993, p. 35)

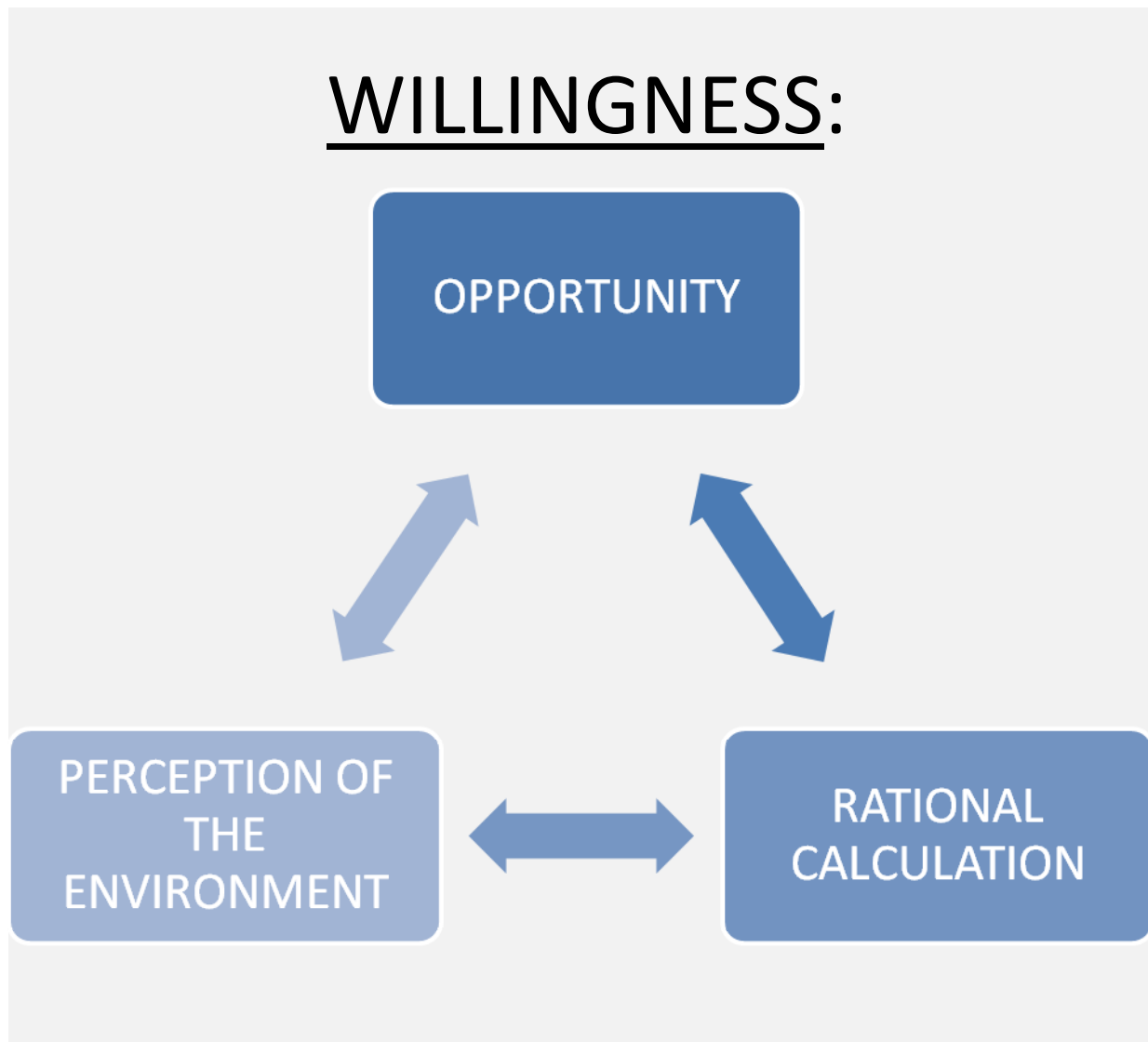


Figure 6.5 Individual Willingness to Act to Affect Democratic Development

Opportunity, Willingness, and Democracy Assistance: A Revised Theory of Change Logic Model

Democracy assistance seeks to directly improve individual, and subsequently, organizational capabilities (hence opportunity) within a recipient state and indirectly to increase the willingness of citizens of the recipient state to engage in activities that are expected to yield democratic development. It is expected (or at least hoped) by democracy assistance providers

that, as individuals become more capable and willing to pursue pro-democratic change in civil society, political parties, or elected office, they will engage in such behavior; further, that such behavior will over time increase their opportunities to engage in more pro-democracy behavior by changing institutions, laws, and norms. That said, the democracy assistance community recognizes that individuals' opportunities and willingness to effect change will be constrained by the political environment in which they are situated.

In consideration of Most and Starr's pre-theoretic framework of opportunity and willingness and the application of this framework to the development of a theory of democratic assistance impact, the original theory of change model that was illustrated in figure 6.3 should be revised. In particular, the "domestic politics" and "individual capabilities" parts of the mechanism can be incorporated into one part, called "opportunity" (see figure 6.6 for an illustration of the revised model, below). Opportunity and willingness function together to affect democratic development. When enough individuals over a sustained period of time have the opportunity and willingness to engage in behaviors -- such as organizing (or improving the organization of) civil society NGOs, running for office, writing/championing legislation that establishes checks and balances or grants law enforcement agencies sufficient funding levels, launching get-out-the vote campaigns, peaceful protest, writing procedures that make agencies function more efficiently, developing channels of communication between constituents and elected officials, developing issue-based party platforms instead of hate-based platforms, etc. -- democratic development ensues. In essence, proponents of democracy assistance view democratic development as the collective behavior of individuals who seek to improve opportunities for freedom and improved quality of life repeatedly over time.

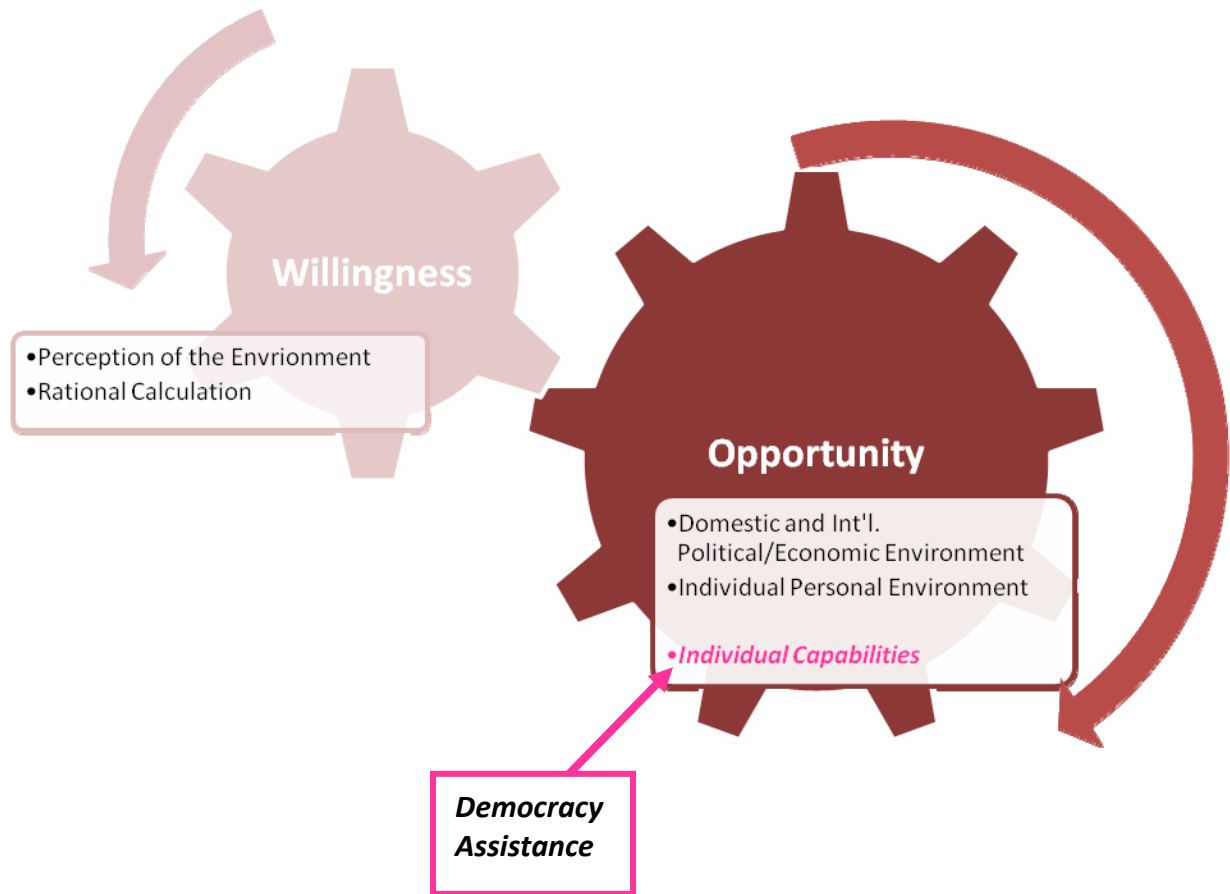


Figure 6.6 The Mechanics of Democracy Assistance Impact (Revised)

This is in stark contrast to the modernization literature reviewed earlier that contends that certain components of a functioning democracy must be in place before others can develop, that economic development will lead to democratic development, or that democracy is a collection of democratic institutions.

Instead, the operating theory of the democracy assistance community views democracy as

behavior – behavior that builds, maintains, and pro-actively reforms institutions that constrain anti-democratic behavior (such as violence, unequal treatment under the law, official disregard for the law, corruption, election-rigging, etc.). This theory views democracy as combined individual behavior – not collective action in the sense of all working together for the common good, but instead the combined behavior of multiple individuals who each play their part to advance democratic development. To illustrate mathematically, let “individual willingness” for each person be w , “individual opportunity” for each person be o , time be t and “democratic development” of the state be d .

$$(w_1)(o_1) + (w_2)(o_2) + (w_3)(o_3) + \dots (w_k)(o_k) + t = d$$

In sum, the theory presented here seeks to explain the relationship between democracy assistance and democratic development. It is hypothesized that democracy assistance seeks to increase individual capabilities. Further, an increase in individual capabilities increases individual opportunity to engage in democracy-building behavior. When combined with other critical opportunities and willingness, individuals will engage in such behavior. If enough (or few well-positioned) individuals engage in democracy-building behavior over time, democracy will irreversibly develop to a degree that ensures freedom, equality, and quality of life.

This study fills an important gap in the literature by developing a new theory of democracy assistance. It makes an original contribution by adapting an international relations pre-theoretic framework -- Most and Starr’s opportunity and willingness framework -- and applying it to a comparative examination of the relationship between democracy assistance and democratic development. Where other democracy assistance scholars have examined the

processes of democratic development, specific democracy assistance endeavors (most often of democratization by force), the state-level aftermath of democracy assistance efforts, or quantitative correlation between state-level assistance funding and state-level democratic development; this is the first study to develop a causal democracy assistance theory.

Methodology

It is not the primary intent of this study to prove or disprove the grand hypothesis that assistance leads to democratic development. Evidence in support of that hypothesis (at least in terms of correlation) has been provided by Finkel, et. al. (2008) Instead, this study seeks to examine how assistance could cause development, to move from correlation to causation by in-depth case studies and to determine if causation is expected to occur by democracy assistance providers through the theory proposed herein; which has been derived from direct participant observation of the democracy community and review of its publications.

The participant observation component of this study was conducted from August 2006 through July 2007. During that time I served as the International Republican Institute's (IRI) Strategic Planning and Evaluation Associate. In my capacity there, I worked for the institute's Senior Vice President and assisted him in his efforts to secure private foundation grants to fund evaluation research. I helped to develop and implement an oral histories project in commemoration of the institute's 25th anniversary. Implementing the oral histories project allowed me to draft interview questionnaires for and observe first-hand oral accounts of several people who were key contributors to the creation of the National Endowment for Democracy and its core institutes in the 1980s. I also helped edit and contributed several chapters to various handbooks on democracy assistance that were published by IRI, including handbooks on governance and political party development programs. Of particular note, I wrote a chapter on evaluation for the governance program handbook. I also advised program staff to help them comply with the new evaluation requirements that were at that time being rolled out by USAID and the State Department. In addition, on behalf of IRI I attended twelve months worth of

ongoing meetings related to evaluation reform, grant proposal review, and development metrics throughout the Washington democracy assistance community (as was explained in greater detail in the preface of this study). This participant observation experience greatly influenced the development of the proposed theory.

A test of the accuracy of the proposed causal theory of democracy assistance will be done through an examination the USAID-funded evaluations of democracy assistance activities in two cases – the Dominican Republic, which is well on its way to consolidated democracy, and Haiti, which is not.

Table 6.1 Hypothesized causal mechanisms of the assistance-development relationship.

- | |
|---|
| <p>H1. Assistance providers operate under the assumption that developing democracies need foreign assistance in order to consolidate.</p> <p>H2. Assistance providers operate under the assumption that foreign democracy assistance in the form of training, counseling, funding, and/or exchange programs increases individual capabilities (hence, opportunity) for democracy-building behavior in recipient states.</p> <p>H3. Assistance providers operate under the assumption that participants in democracy assistance programs are willing to subsequently engage in democracy-building behavior.</p> <p>H4. Assistance providers operate under the assumption that increased democracy-building behavior among assistance program participants leads to development</p> |
|---|

The Test: Fit of the Proposed Theory and Preliminary Indications of Assistance Effectiveness

The study will conduct qualitative case studies by examining USAID-funded evaluation reports of USAID civil society assistance programs in the 1990s and 2000s. The primary purpose is to test the extent to which assistance providers operate under the assumptions

articulated in the above hypotheses which comprise the proposed theory of democracy assistance.

The first hypothesis will be falsified if the evaluation language indicates that the recipient states do not need assistance to develop their democracies or that citizens were engaging in self-sustaining civil-society building behavior prior to or independent of assistance.

The second hypothesis will be falsified if the evaluations indicate that USAID assistance was provided through activities other than those listed, through activities that directly seek organization or systemic state level change, or through activities aimed at directly increasing the willingness component of individual democracy building behavior (instead of the capabilities component). It will also be falsified if the evaluation reports only minimally focus specifically on increasing individual capabilities, or if they do not pay any attention to it whatsoever.

The third hypothesis will be falsified if the evaluations report that the practitioners were skeptical of the likelihood of recipients to change behavior after training. It will also be falsified if the evaluation language indicates that despite the receipt of assistance, providers were concerned that individual or community/state environmental factors would preclude recipients from being willing to change behavior after the receipt of assistance.

The fourth hypothesis will be falsified if the evaluation language does not draw conclusions about the link between individual level assistance and change in the size or quality of the civil society sector.

In addition, preliminary consideration will be given to the extent to which the hypothesized assumptions are actually supported by the evidence presented in the evaluation reports -- in other words, if the evaluators find evidence that the providers achieved their expected results, and if their findings are generated by scientific and unbiased research methods.

Both cases will be examined to determine if the evaluations indicate that participants in assistance programs felt there was a need for such assistance, if democracy assistance increased individual capabilities, and if participants in democracy assistance programs then went on to engage in democracy-building behavior. If they did not proceed to engage in such behavior, the study will identify the reasons provided for this in the evaluations.

Case Selection

The cases of Haiti and the Dominican Republic have been selected on the basis that they provide a diversity of cases: one is an example of moderate success in democratic development and one is an example of failure in democratic development. That said they have both received democracy assistance for decades. This diversity of cases approach follows Gerring's explanation of proper case selection for the purpose of examining causal mechanisms. (2007, p.115-121)

The Dominican transition to democracy began with U.S. assistance in the assassination of longtime brutal dictator General Trujillo in 1961. The country has since progressed along a winding road to democratic and economic development. The Haitian transition to democracy began after the fall of the "Baby Doc" Duvalier dictatorship in 1987 and has fluctuated between corrupt semi-democracy and state failure ever since. However, the United States has been providing assistance in various forms to both countries long before the fall of Trujillo and Duvalier. The U.S. intervened and attempted to establish systems of democratic governance twice in each country since the early 1900s. It trained Trujillo and supplied arms to the Duvaliers throughout the Cold War. Since the fall of Trujillo in 1961 and of Baby Doc in 1987, USAID has been a permanent contributor of democracy assistance in the Dominican Republic

and Haiti. Further, the United States is responsible for 36% of the democracy assistance grants provided to the Dominican Republic and 42% of those provided to Haiti (in 2008 OECD numbers), from bilateral and multilateral donors worldwide..

This study will examine evaluation reports of USAID democracy assistance programs in the Dominican Republic from 1992 to 2002 and in Haiti from 1995 to 2006. The time frame examined is admittedly but a short segment of a long history of democracy assistance in both cases. USAID civil society programs in particular were selected for examination because USAID is responsible for approximately three times the democracy assistance budget of the State Department and the National Endowment for democracy, combined. In addition, the USAID civil society programs over each respective eleven and twelve year timeframe were selected as a convenience sample based on the availability of comparable evaluation reports for one particular assistance sector over a minimum of ten years. This allowed for reporting on short and medium term results, lagged effects of assistance, and change in evaluation practices over time. It also allowed for an examination of relatively current evaluation practices.

In the case of the Dominican Republic (1992 – 2002), there was plenty of opportunity for individuals to engage in democracy-building behavior, but it is not clear whether or not assistance was considered to be needed by participants. Because the Dominican Republic has been on a slow march toward democratic development over several decades, and the political/economic environment was one that should be highly conducive to democracy-building behavior, it offers an excellent case for examination of how/if democracy assistance can make any difference in a country marching toward consolidated democracy. In other words, it provides an opportunity to examine the utility of foreign contributions to capacity building in a country that may otherwise be able to proceed on its own (relative to other countries with less

opportunity for democracy-building behavior). It is a most likely case for successful assistance and sound evaluations, given program continuity over time. It is also a most likely case for unbiased evaluations, given the positive reputation that the program has earned. (Gerring, 2007)

In the case of Haiti (1995 – 2006), the political and economic context was one that offered little opportunity for democracy-building behavior. An environment of extreme domestic insecurity and a history of backlash against agents of reform provide an excellent case for the examination of participant willingness to engage in democracy-building behavior in the context of minimal opportunity. It also provides an opportunity to examine the impact increased capabilities can have in an extreme environment of insecurity and antagonism – in other words, it allows for examination of the difference (if any) increasing capabilities in one sector for a limited group of individuals can make when opportunity is so limited in all other regards. It is a least likely case for successful assistance and sound evaluations based on political instability and program discontinuity over time. It is also a least likely case for unbiased evaluations, given the negative reputation that the program has earned. (Gerring, 2007)

CHAPTER 7

THE CASE OF USAID IN HAITI

This chapter will provide a concise history of democracy in Haiti, an overview of USAID's democracy development assistance to Haiti, and then an examination of the civil society programs implemented in Haiti from 1995 to 2006. It will trace the roots of Haitian democracy from the bloody fifteen year revolution that gave rise to the world's first black republic in 1804; through a century of personalist authoritarianism; to the 1915 American intervention and subsequent twenty year occupation; to failed democracy and the brutal Duvalier dictatorships; and to a second American intervention in the 1990s and state failure in the 2000s. It will then place democracy assistance efforts in Haiti in the context of the larger USAID development assistance agenda there. Finally, the chapter will examine: 1) the extent to which the USAID civil society programs in Haiti from 1995 to 2006 operated under the assumptions articulated in the proposed theory of democracy assistance; and 2) the extent to which the evaluations found that assistance achieved the intended results.

The recent twelve year period was selected, despite a long history of assistance to Haiti, on the basis of three primary factors: the potential application of the results of this study to the modification of current evaluation practices, the availability and accessibility of recent reports is much greater for the last decade of assistance, and a review of ten-plus years of reporting allowed for an examination of the attention paid to, at minimum, medium-term impact.

USAID in the Haiti was selected as a least likely case for this study, because of the large scope, inconsistency, and perceived failure of the program. Further, the prevalence of gang violence and corruption, in addition to the non-responsiveness of national officials to citizen needs, have created a least likely case for USAID success. Based on perception of failure and a highly challenging environment, it is unlikely that USAID operated under a clear theory of democracy assistance and that it was motivated to conduct an objective test of its program effectiveness – perceived failure gave it much to lose in that regard.

The goal of this chapter is to answer four questions:

1. What was the democracy assistance operating theory of USAID in the Haiti?
2. Was USAID's operating theory in the case consistent with my proposed theory of democracy assistance?
3. Did the USAID-sponsored evaluation of its program test USAID's operating theory objectively?
4. What were the results of the evaluation and were they valid?

The results of this case study indicate that the theory of change proposed in the last chapter indeed captures the operating mentality of USAID and its grantee organizations (such as the National Democratic Institute and America's Development foundation). USAID sought to provide assistance in response to specific needs expressed by members of the Haitian community. It then sought to build capacity among Haitians that will enable them to achieve their goals. USAID implied through its reporting processes that participants in the assistance programs were then willing to engage in democracy building activity. USAID attempted to

objectively assess whether there was a correlative increase in indicators of civil society development at the sub-state level.

However, the evaluation reports completed by USAID and its partners were very limited in their examination of the extent to which Haitian program participants proceed to engage in democracy building activities subsequent to the receipt of assistance. Quantities and names of program participants were often listed and a select number of post-training achievements were reported, but the time frame of observation was consistently limited to the short term (one to two years following training or counseling). No consideration was given to medium to long term behavior by program participants. It was instead assumed that short term democracy-building activities by program participants lead to sub-state democratic development. In effect, assistance was provided to individuals but no reporting was provided on subsequent individual activities. As a result, inputs were examined on the individual level but outputs were examined on the sub-state aggregate level, with no attention given to individual level outputs and therefore no attention given to direct causation. This is a clear case of an ecological fallacy.

The examination of program impact was limited to assessments of very short term institutional development, the completion of community projects, or positive participant feedback. But the extent to which these positive developments lead to sustained sub-state democratic development remained assumed and unexamined, as does the extent to which training and counseling lead to sustained democracy-building behavior by program participants. The program evaluations did not take into account prior multi-year assistance endeavors and new program plans do not examine explicitly and retrospectively the outcomes of prior assistance endeavors. Further, negative outcomes were not sufficiently considered or are purposefully severely unreported.

Historical Context

Haiti has suffered both natural and political devastation since its independence. The 2010 earthquake has dealt a blow to human development from which it will take a very long time to recover even with optimal support. The earthquake's aftermath has shed a blinding light on the abject absence of effective governance in the country. However, even before the 2010 earthquake, in 2004 Haiti was deemed a failed state. In the interim, the country appeared to be on the mend. Democratic and economic development were slowly on the rise. Unfortunately, that is no longer so.

Colonialism to the World's First Black Republic

Haiti experienced a tragic birth. After the Spaniards exterminated the entire native population of Hispaniola within forty years of Columbus' landing and depleted the island's supply of precious metals, they imported hundreds of thousands of slaves from West Africa to replace the Indian labor force. Slave-based sugar cultivation for export and cattle breeding became the driving force of the economy.

The French wrested formal control of the western part of Hispaniola in 1697 and established the colony of Saint Dominigue. After nearly one hundred years of French rule, the masses built race-based alliances and rose in revolt against the French. The revolution lasted from 1789 to 1804 and yielded the world's first black republic, Haiti.

The first leaders of the new state built personalist and authoritarian regimes. Haiti's first emperor, Jacques Dessalines exterminated virtually all whites during his two years of rule. Later, Emperor Faustin I, who ruled from 1847 to 1859, massacred the country's mulatto

population. By the early 1900's, Haiti's economy was in a shambles. It was greatly in debt to France, Germany and the United States. It's political system was chronically unstable as described by Georges A. Fauriol,

Suffice it to say the denigration of Haitian politics had indeed attained a new plateau. Of the twenty-two presidents who served between 1842 and 1915, one finished his term in office, three died a natural death while in office, one was blown up with the presidential palace, another one was probably poisoned, one was hacked to pieces, and one resigned. The fourteen others were overthrown. (2000, 560)

The First American Intervention

In 1915 the United States intervened in the wake of government collapse. After President Vilbrun Gillaume Sam was killed by a mob, a period of chaos ensued. According to Fauriol (2000) and Kryzanek (1996), the United States stepped in to prevent European intervention in the Caribbean and to promote political stability and economic development.

The United States occupied Haiti for twenty years. In this time, the U.S. named a customs receiver, required American approval of new debt, and established an American-led constabulary force.

During its occupation of Haiti, the United States did attempt to develop the semblance of constitutional government and made numerous improvements in the areas of health, public works, and bureaucratic administration. But these efforts did little to satisfy the Haitians, who grew increasingly rebellious and contemptuous of the U.S. presence in their country. Contrary to [President]

Wilson's ideals, the Haitians did not see the United States as providing them with an opportunity to develop democracy, but rather as a powerful neighbor instituting a new form of colonialism. (Kryzanek, 1996)

Democratic virtues did not arise in Haiti during this time. Instead, violent anti-U.S. sentiment caused a review of American policy and withdrawal in 1934. Unfortunately, the United States' withdrawal left a system that would provide the springboard for years of violence to come. During its occupation, the United States' attempted to establish effective rule of law. It "set up the Haitian armed forces and a section chief system in their current forms, with the express intention of creating a mechanism of internal control." (Levin, 1995) Further, The United States continued to aid and supply Haiti's army throughout the Cold War (with the exception of a few years of tension with Francois Duvalier) despite its purely repressive function.

The Duvalier Years

A period of increased economic decay, failing governance, and violence followed U.S. intervention until the election of François Duvalier, "Papa Doc," in 1957. His election marked the culmination of a movement of political racialism. Fauriol writes, "In the 1920s a Haitian intellectual class had begun to evolve a potent political racialism derived from a reevaluation of the country's African tradition." He continues, "As a form of 'cultural decolonization,' it was later elaborated by Haitians, including François Duvalier, into a powerful rationale of black political power, which through the early 1970s constituted the framework of government control." (2000, 564). Duvalier's autocratic regime was marked by dissident suppression and corruption. Under his rule, income inequality increased and shortsighted agricultural practices

degraded the land. In addition, both the Roman Catholic Church and the army were brought under his control by the force of his *Tonton Macoutes* paramilitary organization

Upon Papa Doc's death in 1971, his son Jean-Claude Duvalier "Baby Doc" came to power. Baby Doc tried to launch economic reforms but faced great opposition from the Catholic Church. This militancy was sanctioned by the Pope in a call for societal equity. The army refused to quell the riots that it inspired and Baby Doc's regime collapsed in 1986. A transitional military government presided over a virtually anarchic country. All Haitians were given their first ever opportunity to have a say in the form of their government, as they approved a new constitution by national referendum in March, 1987. However, violent elections in November, 1987, were stopped by armed Duvalier supporters who murdered voters at polling stations. What has followed is a series of elected, but quickly overthrown, presidents, natural disasters, and the classification of Haiti as a "failed state."

The Second American Intervention

Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a priest, rode the tide of Catholic activism to power. He was elected in 1991 by an overwhelming majority in what many viewed at the time as Haiti's first modern election. He promised to better the lives of the majority poor population. This was a great shift from a long history of elite rule that ignored the plight of the miserable poor. However, his agenda alienated the army and the elite. To begin with, he directed his inaugural speech to the poor and delivered it in Creole instead of the elites' French. Much worse, he retired the entire high command of the army and abolished the section chiefs. It was no surprise then that an early coup attempt was made, although ultimately failed. Eight months later a second coup attempt led by General Raoul Cedras succeeded. Haiti was subsequently led by Cedras' terror regime for three years.

Despite Aristide's questionable support for democratic governance in the few months he had spent in office, the United States (with the backing of UN Security Council Resolution 920) intervened to restore democracy and secure Aristide's return. In a last ditch 1994 diplomacy effort, the United States brokered a deal in which General Cedras agreed to retire and Aristide was allowed to return to power only until new elections were held. An independent police force was created and an international monitoring force remained.

Unfortunately, the United States did not see their protection of democracy in Haiti through to completion. Once again, it attempted to enforce its ideas of governance in Haiti, yet left in its wake a hotbed of potential for disaster. Granted, elections were held in 1995. However, turnout was extremely low due to accusations of irregularities and little education about the process (Mobekk, 2001). Aristide's candidate, René Préval won in the absence of serious alternatives. According to Mobekk, "The real reason for the low turnout was that the Haitian population did not want the election. The majority wanted Aristide, who had finally returned, to continue as president after his time in exile. However, Aristide's stepping down was one of the conditions set by the international community for his return" (2001, 176).

Because of a predetermined exit deadline and a view that the intervention had succeeded, U.S. soldiers exited after only two years and international forces left shortly thereafter. In fact, for one to say that democracy had been restored to Haiti requires a very superficial definition of democracy. James Dobbins argues that "U.S. forces restored a democratically elected president but left before democratic institutions took hold." (2004, 101) He also contends "Indeed, it seems that the more swift and bloodless the military victory, the more difficult post-conflict stabilization can be." (2004, 103) That said, the USAID did maintain a presence in Haiti as it attempted to build capacity in local government and civil society.

Fraudulent parliamentary elections that followed two years later were boycotted by all but two parties. Mobekk sites one 1997 headline that read, “Democracy on course without the people.” Political crisis ensued when the prime minister was forced to step down and President Préval’s replacement selections were rejected. “In fact Haiti was without a government after June 1997.” Further, Mobekk notes, Secretary of State Madeline Albright “stated, in the midst of this political crisis, that a functioning democratic system existed in Haiti and that ‘our politics vis-à-vis Haiti is a success’.” (2001, 177)

It also must be noted that the United States has played a significant role in establishing institutions that are supposed to keep the peace but instead foster violence and political upheaval. It was bad enough that the U.S. armed section chiefs to maintain the peace in its first intervention, as noted earlier. Those chiefs later became rebel leaders responsible for massacres and the incitement of violence. But, as Levin writes,

The Pentagon and intelligence agencies maintained close ties with Haitian officers and their death squads even in the post-coup period, when they were engaged in wholesale slaughter. Many top officers, including coup leader Lt. Gen. Raoul Cedras, received training at the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, GA. The CIA paid Cedras and other antidemocratic officers as ‘assets’ at least until the 1991 coup. Furthermore, after the coup, the CIA allegedly urged Emmanuel Constant, son of a general who served as army commander under Francois Duvalier, to form FRAPH. FRAPH, which was organized as a Duvalierist political party but functioned primarily as a front organization for military attaches, was responsible for many of the most gruesome human rights abuses committed in 1993 and 1994. (1995, 25)

A Failed State

Due to the fact that the United States did not enforce disarmament, post-intervention Haiti has been plagued by insecurity. In addition, many Haitians expected those who were responsible for crimes committed before the elections to be brought to justice. However, amnesty was granted to many of the accused. This “lack of justice in Haiti after the intervention contributed strongly to the continued existence of fear among the population.” (Mobekk, 2001) While the peasants considered democracy a sham because they saw no improvement in their lives, the elites deemed the political system undemocratic because it was controlled by the international community. (Mobekk, 2001)

By 1999, Préval dissolved parliament, appointed a Prime Minister of his choosing, and ruled by decree in what many viewed as illegitimate governance. In 2000, parliamentary elections were criticized by the international community and deemed invalid by opposition parties. International and local protests were followed by an opposition boycott of the presidential election. Aristide returned to power with over 90 percent of the vote and political violence has plagued the country ever since.

In 2004, armed rebels staged yet again another coup and forced Aristide into exile. The international community, including the U.S., sent limited forces to restore the peace. An interim government was put in place under UN authority until 2006 elections returned Préval to the Presidency. However, it remains unlikely that Haiti’s old political patterns of instability and violence will end any time soon. The devastation caused by the 2010 earthquake has increased this unlikelihood as the destruction of Port-au-Prince rendered the state incapacitated. President Préval’s government proved unable to come to the aid of the people and governance is at a practical stand-still.

Economic Development

With a pre-earthquake per capita GDP of US\$1300, Haiti was already one of the least developed states in the world (CIA World Factbook, 2009). Centuries of sugar and coffee cultivation for export have depleted its top soil, yet it has not diversified its agriculture economy enough to offset the consequences of this environmental degradation. Instead of investing in infrastructure and modernization, Haiti's leaders have consistently exploited the economy for personal gain. They also have borrowed heavily from international organizations and states. Haiti's total debt is now more than one quarter of its GDP and its average annual growth has been declining for several years, with a 1.3% annual growth rate in 2008. Less than half of the population is urban and more than half is illiterate. (CIA World Factbook, 2009)

When measured against Rostow's stages of development, Haiti is still a "traditional society." (1960) There is a limited level of attainable output per person and social outlook is characterized by a sense of fatalism. It lacks the effective centralized national state, the potential for vertical movement in society, and the level of investment in infrastructure required for the "preconditions for takeoff" stage.

Civil Society

Smith writes "It is not uncommon for analysts to claim that the country has no real civil society. (This argument has been used to assert that Haiti is not ready for democracy and to explain why it seems unable to develop.)" However, her analysis of rural civic organizations asserts that "Representing a large variety of organizational structures and objectives, contemporary peasant groups draw on a history of community-based organization predating the Saint Dominigue revolution." (1995)

Smith's views are affirmed by Andrew S. Levin., who argues that Haitian civil society developed under very different conditions from that of the United States. He writes, "Haitian civil society has been the vehicle, energized by liberation theology, in which the country's poor majority has attempted to gain democratic control over its daily life." However, he concludes that "Haitian civil society has been a player independent of both political and economic society." (1995, 26-27)

After Duvalier, popular organizations "exploded overnight" as peasant groups, often funded by foreign NGOs, organized to achieve common objectives. These included pig-market cooperatives, common work teams, small civic projects such as clean streets, Catholic literacy campaigns, and much more. However, this vibrant civil society is for the most part an active participant in the community but not in the "narrow realm of electoral politics." (Levin, 1995) Civil society functions in rural Haiti, but it has weak internal organization and virtually no impact on national politics. One significant exception was Catholic activism that brought Aristide to power.

Further, the extreme division between the political and business elite in Haiti is so great that some label it as a system of apartheid. (USAID, 1999, p.3) Combined with a long history of political violence - that included the repression of dissent and even of political participation by section chiefs and later by national military thugs – this apartheid-like social structure has left little space for the development of civil society and has left the populace wary of political engagement. It is important to remember that following the *coup d'état* of 1991,

"The military regime was able to manipulate the traditional elite through corruption and relatively gentle pressure. But they went after civil society with a vengeance. It is estimated that some 300,000 CSO representatives and other activists were hunted down.

About 5,000 were killed. Dozens of CSO leaders fled into exile. Others were bought and corrupted, transformed into internal spies or ‘agents of confusion.’ By 1994, civil society in Haiti was in thorough disarray. Although the majority of citizens had kept their aspirations for democratic freedoms, the dismantling of grassroots organizations and the general atmosphere of fear and confusion prevented any concerted action.” (USAID, 1999, p. 5-6)

Although USAID has persisted since the return of Aristide to power in 1994 to provide assistance to Haitian civil society, the political environment is such that it makes Haiti a least likely case for assistance success. Not only is there little opportunity for civic engagement, especially with the national government; class division, extreme political instability, and a history of violent political repression are likely to diminish the willingness of Haitians to engage in civil society activities. USAID seeks to increase the capacity of civil society organizations and in so doing increase their willingness and ability to actively contribute to Haitian democratic development.

USAID in Haiti:

USAID has been providing development assistance to Haiti since the agency was established in 1961. (USAID, 1951 – see note on this date in the chapter references) Assistance was directed toward the development of economic resources and productive capacities from the beginning. By the 1970s USAID was providing an average of US\$20 million in development

assistance to Haiti per year. The programs focused primarily on the development of the agriculture sector, including: irrigation, small farm production, small agribusiness, a grain market system, an agriculture marketing system, agriculture management, road maintenance for the transport of goods, soil erosion control, and fisheries. In addition, USAID provided assistance for disaster relief from fires and floods; public health improvements, including malaria eradication, nutrition education, maternal healthcare, family planning, general health services, and communicable disease control; as well as education, water supply, and energy supply. (USAID, 1977)

By the 1980s, USAID continued to provide around the same levels of development assistance as it did in the 1970s, and the focus remained, for the most part, the same. (USAID, 1982) However, in addition USAID provided assistance for rural credit services, private enterprise development, sanitation, national parks, energy conservation, and food aid. In 1981, the agency conducted a pilot training seminar in project management for the government of Haiti. Although assistance continued to be provided for improved governance, the primary aim was improvements that would yield economic development. Throughout the 1980s, the agency began to assist factory workers to create what it hoped would become a labor movement. It also provided aid to the Association of Voluntary Agencies for increased development cooperation among NGOs.

It was not until the collapse of Baby Doc Duvalier's dictatorship in 1986 that USAID began to provide assistance aimed at directly democratic development. In 1987, the agency provided a US\$375,000 grant for a voter education program in preparation for the 1987 elections. (USAID, 1987) As noted earlier, those elections were violently aborted. USAID democracy assistance did not resume until 1990, when a grant was awarded to IFES to

implement the technical and operation aspects of the 1990 elections. (USAID, 1990) After Aristide was elected president, USAID began a “transition to democracy initiative.” The program sought to improve government effectiveness, accountability, the administration of justice, and respect for human rights -- in part by mobilizing and training civil society.⁷ (USAID, 1991)

The following sections will examine the extent to which USAID civil society assistance programs were aimed at capacity-building, the quality of their program evaluations, and whether or not the programs contributed to democratic development in Haiti. Programs will be considered that were implemented between 1995 and 2006.

USAID-Haiti Civil Society Assistance Program Activities and Evaluations (1995-2006)

Civil Society program 1995-1999

USAID launched a Civil Society Program in Haiti in 1994 that ran through 1999 and was implemented by America’s Development Foundation (ADF)⁸. The program was renewed for 18 months thereafter, to be implemented by Management Systems International (MSI). This analysis will focus on the program that was implemented by ADF through 1999. The parent program was the Democracy Enhancement Project (DEP), which sought to develop institutions and strengthen civil society, particularly in regards to decentralization. DEP’s institution-

⁷ By the mid-2000s USAID development assistance to Haiti averaged approximately US\$200 million per year – just over about one tenth of that is allocated to democracy assistance.

⁸ ADF is an American private voluntary organization that was established in 1980 to assist U.S. efforts to promote development abroad. It has served as a primary contractor for USAID and the NED on over thirty economic, social, and democratic development grants throughout the world.

building component provided grants to strengthen political parties, the national assembly, and local governance. The purpose of DEP's civil society component, nicknamed Asosye, "was to increase the capacity of private institutions and individuals to facilitate broad-based participation in democratic decision-making, and to promote and enhance respect for the Constitution." (DAI, 1999, p. 12). Asosye sought to do so through providing assistance in the development of civic education campaigns, opening channels of dialogue between all sectors of society, providing assistance to foster communication with local government and increase trust of government, and to assist labor organizations' capacity to pursue a peaceful policy agenda.

Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) was hired to conduct an evaluation of DEP in 1999⁹. The evaluation was of both the institution building and civil society programs. This study will focus solely on the civil society program evaluation. Surprisingly for a government-funded study, the DAI evaluation was highly critical of the Asosye program. It found that the program did succeed in changing direction in response to challenges in implementation, in increasing civil society dialogue on national political issues, increasing media coverage of that dialogue, and training many trainers on advocacy issues. However, DAI found that Asosye project fell short in many regards.

It criticized Asosye for "no programmatic response, monitoring of results or follow-up to the national dialogues..." (1999, p.49). Further, DAI contended that the program was not well designed for the context of Haitian political culture. This was particularly problematic in regards to the absence of "lobby-able" bodies of government, issue-oriented political parties, institutions that provide public services, and a sense of individual rights – the Haitian public has long considered rights to be derived from one's ability to succeed in the private or public sector,

⁹ DAI is a for-profit development consulting firm that was founded in 1970. It is regularly hired by UASID as an independent evaluation contractor. Its headquarters are in Washington, D.C.

instead of the American conception of natural rights. In addition, in its key findings, DAI contended that although individuals within civil society have “demonstrated a significant degree of resilience, and a willingness to engage in open debate of important national issues,” they, “have been less willing or able to act upon these debates in practical ways.” (1999, p. 49) This is in part due to the fact that assistance recipients have become overly focused on securing funding through the program instead of focusing on the development of advocacy campaigns. DAI recognized that for this reason, and to ADF’s credit, it suspended the grant-giving mechanism of the program and instead refocused efforts on training.

As the theory of change proposed in this study predicts, the Asosye program sought to increase civil society advocacy capacity. The program found that members of civil society organizations were willing to receive training and participate in dialogue, but that they were unlikely to follow through with practical advocacy campaigns after training – or if they did follow through, the program did not track such activity.

The evaluation of the program proved to be of high quality, insofar as it answered many critically analytical questions of the program and it sought input from a wide cross-section of stakeholders in all sectors of society. It sought evidence in support of program effectiveness, examined unintended consequences, and appears to have reported in an unbiased manner, with substantial suggestions for lessons to be learned and new approaches to be taken.

The evaluation found the program to be only partially successful, specifically in increasing dialogue, media coverage of civic dialogue, and some advocacy capacity. However, the evaluation found there to be a lack of follow-through on dialogue and training. Although capacity may have been increased, there was no follow through to demonstrate that was the case. The evaluation reported that training occurred and was well received. However, such is not an

indicator of actual increased capacity – it is instead an indicator of an input (training) and perception of that input, but not of the outcome of the program.

Citizens' Networks Program 2000-2002

USAID continued its civil society assistance under a new Citizens' Networks Program in 2000. USAID granted America's Development Foundation (ADF) one million dollars to “strengthen popular organizations as constituencies promoting democratic governance in Haiti.” (ADF 2002, 1) The program was implemented as part of the USAID/Haiti strategic objective of “More genuinely inclusive democratic governance.” (ADF,2002, 1) In its final evaluation report, the grantee contended that the program, “fostered the conditions necessary for civil society organizations to have greater influence on policies, provide expanded civil society oversight of public institutions, and increase the responsiveness of public officials.” (2002, 1)

Through ADF, USAID assistance reached far more civil society organizations than did the Asosye project. The Networks program provided assistance to over 400 popular organizations (representing over 250,000 citizens) from twenty communes (out of 133 total) in Haiti in the form of training sessions. Training included a two-day session on democratic governance in each commune that covered the 1987 Haitian Constitution, the role civic organizations can play in improving governance, and how to become more engaged with all levels of government.

Five, two-day, training sessions called “training of trainers workshops” were also provided to 120 people from 73 organizations and 19 communes. These sought to “build local capacity for civic education and citizen mobilization in order to build citizen participation in

democratic governance.” (ADF 2002, 5) The workshops taught about group dynamics and community education techniques.

In addition, ADF provided technical assistance to organize and host one-day civic forums in seventeen communes. The forums brought together more than two thousand people, including citizens, members of popular organizations and civil society groups, local government officials, and business representatives. The forums provided an opportunity for dialogue and the identification of civic priorities. Participants in each forum elected people from local government, popular organizations and the business sector to develop strategies and work with ADF to accomplish the two selected priorities. Many of the commissions established by the working session went on to become formalized coalitions in 18 of the twenty participating communes. At least ten of those went on to become legally recognized by the Ministry of Social Affairs. ADF credits itself for helping make this so by providing technical assistance with building organizational infrastructure and encouraging the coalitions that formed to pursue official recognition by the government so that they could operate as functioning non-profit organizations.

The reported result was that the assistance, ...succeeded in raising awareness and understanding in popular organizations of the role they must play in building democratic governance and strengthened their commitment and capacity to fulfill this role. This success was evident in the increased networking and coalition building among popular organizations, as well as the increased number of civic actions that took place...as well as developing practical experience...[and]...forming enduring local development committees (referred to as ‘Coalitions’) that formalize cooperation between the popular sector, local authorities, business and other civil society

actors in each of the twenty communes. The final eight months also saw the development of inter-communal approaches to resolving problems and the ongoing implementation of civic actions at the communal and cluster level. (ADF 2002, 1-2)

In a baseline study conducted by ADF, participants reported that prior to the receipt of assistance from this particular program over 50% to 60% had offered civic education to citizens, engaged in issue advocacy, and worked with other organizations through coalitions and networks.

Post-training participant surveys indicated that many participants perceived a need for the continuance of such training sessions and that the sessions taught them a lot of relevant and important information that would help them achieve the goals specified by the program objectives. Further, a full list of program participants was available and reported to USAID in an earlier report.

The final report repeatedly sought to justify its activities through an explanation of its operating theory. However it is striking that the theoretical justifications offered focus solely on what is required within a society for it to develop a strong civil society. Blatantly missing is any discussion of how assistance can actually help achieve this. For example, the justification offered for the strategy planning sessions was as follows,

Democratic governance implies a partnership between the principal societal actors (government, civil society, and market) in the making and implementation of public policy, resolving public problems, and the allocation and management of public resources. The process of developing strategies jointly by these three actors to address

local priorities is, in itself, a process that contributes to stronger democratic governance because it establishes the legitimacy of citizen participation in local decision-making and develops the practice of working together to resolve public problems and allocate public resources. As practical experience in the practice of democratic governance grows, this establishes new societal norms within the commune and serves as a model for the rest of the country. Furthermore, in many communes the strategies developed foresee influencing central government decisionmaking to achieve contributions of its resources for the resolution of local problems. Through this, democratic governance at the local level channels citizen participation and demand up to the national level. In other communes, the strategies contribute further to democratic governance by expanding the understanding of this concept and related practices through civic education sponsored jointly by local government and civil society. (ADF 2002, p.)

Although the practice of developing a multi-sector strategy may indeed help legitimize and establish norms of citizen participation in policy decisionmaking over time, this discussion does not consider what happens when USAID leaves or changes focus. There is no plan for or actual follow through in later reports to determine if indeed capacity was built within civil society by USAID assistance and if that capacity was then combined with sustained citizen participation in policy decisionmaking.

It is very possible, and indeed likely, that the training was viewed as valuable by participants but that the multi-sector strategy sessions were not sustained over time. Did the norms take root as expected? The answer remains unknown because no follow-up reports were conducted. The report indicates that many of the committees which worked together in the

strategy sessions and the commissions established to implement the agenda later were formalized into legally recognized coalitions. However, no post-program evaluation was conducted to see if the coalitions remained intact and if they accomplished the priorities set in the public forums. Further, no consideration is given to the possibility of negative effects that may result from assistance. This is disconcerting, given the fact that one of the coalitions formed with the help of the USAID was later labeled a “death squad.”

As CNN reported, “During almost all of February, a violent pro-government death squad known as Bale Wouze, or Clean Sweep, terrorized Saint Marc. Bale Wouze was led by Amanus Mayette, a former parliamentary deputy belonging to Aristide's party whose term had expired in January.” (2004) ADF included Bale Wouze in its list of institutions that received training and counseling. Further, ADF assigned Bale Wouze a grade of “excellent” for its institutional performance. Two years later, in February of 2004, Bale Wouze terrorized and massacred associates of the Aristide opposition days before Aristide was forced into exile.

It is not assumed here that USAID assistance necessarily strengthened the capacity of Bale Wouze in a way that empowered it to perpetrate such heinous crimes. This example instead is raised here as a possible case of negative impact, demonstrating the need for continued monitoring of recipient individual and organizational behavior. Was this an isolated case or did the other coalitions that participated in USAID training sessions also contribute to the rise of violent activity in the lead-up to Aristide's ouster and the state of chaos that followed? Current evaluation practices ignore individual-level examination and instead skip from accounting of programmatic outputs (number of training sessions held, coalitions formed, or pro-democracy laws passed) to aggregate state level indicators of democratic institutions. The result is an ecological fallacy that fails to account for any real causal relationship between group assistance,

positive or negative recipient behavior, and ultimately democratic development or decay.

It is important to note that in addition to the capacity building, the USAID grantee provided “technical assistance for conflict mediation and resolution between popular organizations” and “facilitated contact and communication between popular organizations and local authorities, and even between different local authorities working in the same commune.” (ADF 2002, 12). Therefore, the USAID grantee acted as the mediator, facilitator and most likely go-between among these sectors. This is not a capacity-building activity and is not likely to result in sustained communication between sectors. It remains to be seen what happens after the grantee leaves – do the sectors continue to communicate and do the disputes between organizations remain settled (and did the program participants adopt the resolution practices that the grantee recommended over the long term)? No follow-up report provides this information. Capacity may have been strengthened, but it is unknown if it empowered participants to engage in similar behavior over the medium to long term and if participants were willing to do so over the long term given the extreme environmental challenges that they faced in the midst of political upheaval and a failing state.

“Policy Issues Dialogue between Haitian Civil Society Organizations and National

Public Institutions” and “CSO Political Advocacy Indicator Data” 1999-2003

In stark contrast to individual final program reports, such as those by ADF in 2002 that were discussed in the previous section, USAID provided grants to Management Systems International and ARD, Inc. to collect and report on survey data across USAID civil society assistance programs in Haiti.¹⁰ The goal of these grants was to assess the impact of USAID civil

¹⁰ Management Systems International is a private international development firm of technical consultants. It was founded in 1981 and its headquarters are in Washington, D.C. ARD, Inc. is a technical, engineering, and consulting

society assistance programs conducted by multiple grantee organizations (NDI, ADF, IFES, and MSI) from 1999 until 2003. A series of reports was issued on civil society organization indicators during each of those five years. These reports were designed to provide indicators of “intermediate results” of civil society assistance. One set of reports measured the intermediate results as the “number of examples of policy issues on which CSOs and national public institutions carry on an organized dialogue.” (ARD, Inc., 2002 p.1). A second set of reports measured the intermediate results as an index of civil society advocacy based on quantitative survey data. Each of these will be considered in turn.

The policy dialogue reports coded Haitian newspaper articles to capture the number of “meetings or encounters of various forms through which CSOs have attempted to engage the state (annually, 2001-2003). Examples include letter writing campaigns, rallies, roundtable discussions, media campaigns and petitions. ‘National public institutions’ include agencies of ministries, representatives of these agencies at the local level and executive or legislative commissions at the local levels.” (ARD, Inc., 2002, p. 1) Each study ranked the most active organizations by sector, compared annual activity level, and ranked the type (“means”) of activity in order of aggregate frequency for all organizations.

Of the 15 most active organizations in the 2003 report, only five were also listed as most active in the 2002 report. There was no discussion in either report of whether or not those most active organizations were recipients of USAID assistance. No pre-assistance baseline of activity levels were provided for organizations that did receive assistance. No information is provided regarding whether or not the groups that received assistance became active in a manner consistent with their training. In effect, no attempt was made to attribute change in the level of

firm that was founded in Burlington, VT in 1977. Both MSI and ARD are regular recipients of USAID’s international development program evaluation contracts.

civil society activity to specific USAID assistance programs. Further, it is important to note that the types of activities which saw an increase in frequency from 2002 to 2003 are mostly those which have a tendency to increase political instability: conferences, demonstrations, strikes and violent demonstrations all increased in frequency, while articles, creation of organizations, and statements all decreased in frequency. (ARD, 2003, p. 12) Hence, perhaps an increase in many types of civil society activity has the potential to be detrimental to democratic development, but no consideration of this is included in the report. It is assumed that increased activity leads to increased democratic development, which may not be the case, given the data provided.

In the second series of studies, the organization indicators were compiled into “Advocacy Index Ratings” from surveys conducted annually from 1999 through 2003. The Index was intended to “measure achievement of Intermediate Result (IR) 5.1, *Targeted Haitian CSOs Progress in Developing their Capacity to Advocate for Policy Change.*” (ARD, 2003 p.1) The surveys were administered across Haiti. In 2003, for example, the surveys were administered by ARD, Inc. in five Haitian departments: Ouest, Nord, Artibonite, Grande Anse, and Sud-est. in over three weeks in the fall. The sample size changed over time to reflect the increase in the number of organizations that received assistance each year. Further the same organizations were not included in the sample each year, so the results do not allow for organization-specific analysis of advocacy behavior over time. As the 2003 report notes, the results, “do not reflect changes in advocacy capacity of CSOs assisted by specific programs, because of changes in the composition of the groups surveyed. This point is especially valid for this year’s advocacy index, because most of the groups surveyed in 2003 are included for the first time.” (ARD, 2003, p. 8)

Survey questions, however, were fairly consistent over the course of the five years in which the surveys were conducted. The surveys sought to capture perception within civil society and popular organizations of the following components deemed to indicate advocacy capacity:

1. CSOs clearly articulate their objectives
2. CSOs collect information and input about issues that concern them
3. CSOs formulate a policy position on the issue in a consultative fashion
4. CSOs obtain and/or allocate resources for advocacy of premier issue
5. CSOs promote coalitions and undertake network building, to achieve cooperative efforts in support of premier issue
6. CSOs take actions to influence policy making or other aspects of the issue
7. CSOs undertake follow-up actions, after a policy decision is made to foster implementation and/or to maintain public interest.
8. CSOs members are represented by its leadership

(ARD, 2003 p. 9)

Although these series of reports succeed in capturing aggregated information of average civil society organization capacity for each year examined, inconsistency in sampling make it such that the aggregated information does not reflect the extent to which recipient organizations' capacity increased over time. Concomitantly, the index reveals that civil society organizations on average each year fair poorly in securing/allocating resources for advocacy and in the undertaking of follow-up actions after policy decisions are made – which is indicative of the

unlikelihood that capacity-building assistance leads to further pro-democracy behaviors over time.

This annual capacity analysis also fails to consider in detail the specific policy issues that were advocated by the organizations or the extent to which environmental factors fostered or inhibited the ability of organizations with greater institutional capacity to translate that capacity into pro-democracy behavior. No information is provided in this series regarding which types of issues the organizations focused on or regarding the means by which they pursued their aims.

When the capacity and activities reports are compared, only one organization that was surveyed for advocacy capacity among assistance recipients in 2003 was on the list of the 15 most active organizations in the 2003 dialogue report, which raises several questions. Is this because capacity building assistance is ineffective in increasing recipient organizations' advocacy activities, or is this simply because the sample surveyed for advocacy capacity was too limited in that it did not include many CSOs that both received assistance and increased activity? Because there is no consistency between the capacity and activities reports, one is left to wonder what the relationship is between receipt of training, subsequent change in level of organization, and number of advocacy activities. The idea was sound in that it collected important data, but inconsistency in methodology, sample selection, and reporting across the studies leaves little opportunity for any comparison of results, much less causal analysis.

Nowhere is the information tied back to an examination of assistance effectiveness – the links are assumed. There is no discussion whatsoever of the impact USAID assistance is expected to have or appears to have had on the number of advocacy activities trainees engage in or on the level of advocacy organization trainees attain. Further, there is no discussion of the

relationship between civil society organization activities or organization level, and democratic development for the state as a whole.

However there is significant attention paid to the lack of opportunity civil society advocates had to effect change given the polarized political environment. CSOs were increasingly attacked by the Lavalas popular organization at the close of 2003, CSOs were pressured by the government to appear politically neutral, and there was no institutionalized mechanism for communication with the national government so all communication had to be indirect – the government was not even willing to meet with CSOs in most instances. (ARD, Inc., 2003).

Further, Haiti plummeted into state failure as Aristide was ousted from office in 2004 and it appears that the USAID-sponsored collection of civil society activity and capacity indicators ceased at that point. Focus shifted toward a transition initiative aimed at establishing a security environment conducive to pro-democracy endeavors. In effect, the *implied* theory going into the new Haiti Transition Initiative in 2004 was that organizational capacity is irrelevant in a failed state context in which the opportunity for democracy-building activities does not exist.

The Haiti Transition Initiative 2004-2006

The Haiti Transition Initiative (HTI) that was implemented from 2004 to 2006 contrasts with the previously discussed civil society programs in that it was a conflict mitigation and prevention program funded by USAID and implemented by the International Organization for Migration (OIM). Specifically, it was designed to provide a peaceful transition from conflict, “by providing support to citizens and government to work together towards rebuilding stable

communities.” (USAID 2006, p.7) Although this was done via community development programs, predominately through the building of public and utilities infrastructure, there was also an emphasis on civil society development. The program sought to create a stable environment for the February 2006 elections, but it did not focus directly on election programming. The intent was to create community cohesion that would drive gangs out and enhance security. The program was implemented concomitantly with a separate law enforcement development program deemed essential to a stable transition.

A final evaluation of the initiative was published by Management Systems International in October 2006. The evaluation found that the

The model’s greatest impact has been in revitalizing community organizations – making them more effective tools for development with enhanced capabilities to sustain community development activities after HTI. The model also links communities and their governments, building a broader instrument for conflict prevention and mitigation. Newly-established relationships will serve as a significant building block toward a broader and more cohesive Haitian democratic state. (2006, p. 3)

The evaluation also noted that HTI was a short term solution for deep seated and long-term problems and it recommended that USAID follow-up with long-term development solutions to rampant unemployment and ineffective local governance. The methodological approach of the evaluation was qualitative case studies of the community development programs including program document analysis, interviews of key actors in the program (USAID staff in Washington, OMI staff in Haiti, community leaders, local government officials, and

representatives of the national government). The evaluation, commissioned by USAID, sought to answer several administrative questions. Central to this study, it sought to determine if OTI succeeded in implementing its strategy and what role HTI activities played in reestablishing stability in the communities. (2006, p.7)

MSI concluded that HTI succeeded in implementing its strategy, as the program increased community “problem-solving capacity” and strengthened community organizations. (2006, 21). It did so through projects such as rehabilitating a school, building a playground, conducting tournaments, holding summer camps, planting trees, building cisterns, building retaining walls, building public parks, holding theater productions at new community centers and more. OMI’s role in these projects included the provision of funds, managing dialogue between rival gangs, negotiating between national and local government and frustrated community organizations, increasing community organization confidence in the ability to solve problems and manage utilities, and organizing public forums for community dialogue in a peaceful environment. OMI, in effect, acted as the coordinator between local government, national government, community organizations, and international partners. It also succeeded in negotiations between communities and gangs, except in one instance in which it was forced to cancel a project.

Although the communities did see a subsequent decline in gang violence as community development projects were implemented and community members worked together to pressure the gangs to stay out, the sustainability of these successes remains highly suspect. MSI admits that as a transition initiative, HTI was only a short term solution and that long-term follow-up was needed. However, the program was also framed as a capacity-building initiative and it is difficult to imagine that community cohesion will remain as OMI (facilitator, negotiator,

organizer, manager, coordinator and funder) departs. It seems unlikely that the capacity of community organizations and local governments was strengthened when OMI was so centrally micromanaging each project instead providing the training that is more likely to build capacity and long term development.

In a separate summary of results, USAID contended that in FY2005, “USAID continued to strengthen the media and to assist civil society organizations to engage in local advocacy...3328 individuals from civil society organizations were trained to engage local officials to address community problems using local resources.” (USAID 2006, p.3) Here is another example of reporting on impact in terms of the number of individuals trained, with no consideration given to post-training behavior. It reports on individual level outputs: number of people trained. But then it is left assumed that these individual level outputs will yield state-level increases in democratic development. No follow-up examination of trainee behavior was conducted.

At the conclusion of HTI in 2006, USAID shifted focus to the new democracy and governance programming. Specifically, it launched a new civil society advocacy program in 2007, to be implemented by NDI and Internews. The program was designed to prioritize, “strengthening local organizations empowering them to become active agents for change.” (Pact, 2007, p. 1) The components of the new Civil Society Advocacy program included:

- Component 1: Civic Education and Communities Initiatives. Activities under this component will promote civic education on democratic norms and values, and seek to act upon those values through the promotion of community-driven initiatives.

- Component 2: Civil Society Advocacy. Activities under this component will strengthen the ability of civil society organizations – be they at the national or sub-national level – to identify, articulate, defend and promote citizen’s interests, thus positively impacting policy formation and implementation by the government.
- Component 3: Communications and Media. Component three envisions a range of activities that will increase the relevance, quality, and reach of community radio stations and regional journalists networks.
- Component 4: Civil Society Organizational Capacity Building: Activities under component four will be focused on increasing the institutional effectiveness of CSOs, in order to ensure that, while increasing their ability to engage in advocacy, these same organizations are not consumed by the effort in “one-off” exertions. (Pact, 2007, p. 1)

These components are detailed here, because it is striking that they include many of the same elements of the civil society programming from prior years. However, there is no consideration overtly given in the reports to the effectiveness of prior programs or to lessons learned. It is clear that lessons learned did factor into the planning, given the last sentence that the program seeks to prevent “one-off” exertions – this is a clear reference to the MSI HTI report that suggested long-term solutions need to be considered. However, there appears to be no published record of debate regarding lessons learned and the way to monitor impact from one USAID civil society assistance program to the next.

Further, in a separate worldwide audit of USAID democracy activities, the USAID Office of the Inspector General concluded that USAID/Haiti did not achieve its objectives and that, “At

USAID/Haiti, adequate records were not always kept to support reported results. Support was lacking for 6 of the 15 results reported in the 2007 operational plan. Proper documentation was not a high priority for partners, and cognizant technical officers did not periodically verify reported results. “ (USAID OIG, 2009 p.10-11)

Conclusions from the Haiti Case

The above examination of USAID civil society programs in Haiti from 1995 to 2006 has laid the contextual foundation for consideration of the four hypotheses proposed by this paper’s theory. Each will be discussed in turn.

H1. Developing democracies need foreign assistance in order to consolidate:

Survey results from the reports examined reveal that Haitian recipients of USAID’s civil society assistance programs perceived value in the training and facilitative efforts provided by the program implementers. Further, participants expressed interest in continued assistance. However, no evidence was found to support the notion that Haiti needs assistance to consolidate. In fact, it has received assistance for decades and has yet to consolidate democracy. It appears that factors exogenous to assistance may likely comprise the necessary conditions for democratic consolidation.

H2. *Foreign democracy assistance in the form of training, counseling, funding, and/or exchange programs increases individual capabilities (hence, opportunity) for democracy-building behavior.*

The program reports examined herein do not provide evidence in support of this hypothesis. Although this assumption was affirmed repeatedly in every program report, USAID's reporting and evaluation practices produced data that did not allow for examination of change in individual capabilities (nor of organizational capabilities) over time. Only one of the four programs considered in this study attempted to test for increased capabilities over time. However, that study only examined capabilities at the organizational level and collected data from varying organizations at multiple points in time. Hence, the reports provided evidence in support of increased average capabilities across Haitian civil society. However, that increase could not be attributed to assistance, because the actual organizations that received assistance were not observed at various points in time.

H3. *Participants in democracy assistance programs are willing to subsequently engage in democracy-building behavior.*

The USAID program reports did not collect or report on data related to the willingness component of this theory. Therefore, there was no evidence found to support the willingness hypothesis. However, the reporting practices do provide evidence in support of the fact that this is indeed a consistent USAID operating assumption. All of the reports examined indicate that USAID implementers believed that program participants were seeking assistance in order to engage in democracy-building behavior. Further, the reports acknowledged and the programs were modified to address environmental factors that were prohibitive of such behavior.

Specifically, USAID sought to mediate disputes between civil society and government officials at the local and national levels as well as between gangs in order to create an environment conducive to pro-democracy behavior among the willing. Therefore, USAID acknowledged that capacity-building does not increase the willingness of participants to engage in pro-democracy behavior when the political environment is one of insecurity. Over time, USAID changed its civil society programs away from advocacy-training and civic education to establishing the security environment necessary for pro-democracy behavior.

H4. *Increased democracy-building behavior among assistance program participants leads to development at the sub-state level (e.g., civil society, rule of law, governance, etc.).*

As noted in reference to the second hypothesis, USAID reports did seek to determine if, in this case, civil society as a sub-state sector did develop. Two separate sets of reports examined this. One set conducted a content analysis of media reports to determine if there was an increased level of dialogue between civil society and national public institutions. The second set conducted annual surveys of civil society organizations over a couple of years to determine organizational capacity. However, no effort was made to establish a link between receipt of USAID assistance and civil society development over time. Instead the data was collected on the dependent variables, dialogue and organizational capacity, but not specifically for assistance recipients at different points in time. The causal link was assumed but no evidence was collected to support this assumption. Ultimately, USAID abandoned its civil society capacity-building program and instead pursued a community cohesion program aimed at building security. Hence, despite its initial efforts, any capacity increase that assistance may have yielded was lost in a

conflict environment. No evidence was collected in support of the assumption that program participants changed behavior in a way that developed democratic civil society.

In conclusion, the Haiti case study establishes that the proposed theory of this paper is indeed the operating theory of USAID's civil society programs. These democracy assistance programs assume that their assistance is needed, that assistance will increase individual and organizational capabilities, that such capabilities will allow those who are willing to engage in pro-democracy behavior do so if the political environment is secure enough, and that such behavior on the part of program participants will lead to civil society development at the sub-state level over time.

However, USAID and its interlocutors' reporting and evaluation practices fail to collect the data necessary to provide evidence in support of its own operating theory. Much effort and expense have been devoted to evaluating program efficacy, but inconsistency in data collection, incomplete record-keeping, and failure to develop or test an explicitly specified theory of democracy assistance has precluded USAID from establishing an empirically supported link between assistance inputs and civil society development outcomes. Although the link may exist, the data USAID had collected in the case of Haiti does not support such a link. Further, political upheaval and conflict in Haiti, in the midst of USAID's assistance efforts, lead one to conclude that USAID capacity building did not yield the anticipated state-level results. But, it remains possible that USAID succeeded in building individual-level capacity that, in a secure environment, could have caused democratic development. The data simply was not collected (and cannot be reconstructed in retrospect) to assess if this was the case or not

Perhaps, in contrast, the more stable political environment in the Dominican Republic allowed USAID to better establish a causal link between its assistance programs and democratic development in that state. The following chapter will examine if this was indeed the case.

CHAPTER 8

THE CASE OF USAID IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

This chapter will provide a concise history of democracy in the Dominican Republic, an overview of civil society there, and then an examination of USAID's evaluation of its civil society programs implemented in the country from 1992 to 2002. . It will trace the roots of Dominican democracy beginning with the declaration of independence from Spain in 1821, from Haiti in 1844, and from Spain again in 1882; to the first American intervention of 1924; to the brutal Trujillo dictatorship and U.S.-assisted assassination of 1961; to the second American intervention in 1965; and finally the fifty-year democratic transition and emergence of civil society that began with Trujillo's demise. It will then place democracy assistance efforts in the Dominican Republic in the context of the larger USAID development assistance agenda there. Finally, the chapter will examine: 1) the extent to which the USAID civil society programs in the Dominican Republic from 1992 to 2002 operated under the assumptions articulated in the proposed theory of democracy assistance; and 2) the extent to which the evaluations found that assistance achieved the intended results.

This recent eleven year period was selected on the basis of three primary factors: the potential application of the results of this study to the modification of current evaluation practices, the availability and accessibility of recent reports is much greater for the last decade of

assistance, and a review of ten-plus years of reporting allowed for an examination of the attention paid to, at minimum, medium-term impact.

USAID in the Dominican Republic was selected as a most likely case for this study, because of the large scope and perceived success of the program as well as the successful growth of civil society and its increased role in Dominican politics in recent years. Based on perception of success, it is more likely that USAID operated under a clear theory of democracy assistance and that it was motivated to conduct an objective test of its program effectiveness – perceived success gave it little to lose in that regard.

The goal of this chapter is to answer four questions:

5. What was the democracy assistance operating theory of USAID in the Dominican Republic?
6. Was USAID's operating theory in the case consistent with my proposed theory of democracy assistance?
7. Did the USAID-sponsored evaluation of its program test USAID's operating theory objectively?
8. What were the results of the evaluation and were they valid?

The study finds that the operating theory of USAID's civil society program in the Dominican Republic was only partially consistent with my democracy assistance theory. In contrast to my theory, USAID sought to directly impact *willingness* in addition to capabilities, at least in one of three parts of its program. The USAID contractor did make a seemingly-objective attempt to examine the success of the program in terms of increasing individual-level pro-democracy behavior and increasing organization-level capacity. However, the evaluation suffered from severe methodological flaws that rendered its results for the most part invalid.

Historical Context

The story of the Dominican Republic is one of resilience. It is a little country of about ten million people and forty-nine thousand square miles on the island of Hispaniola. It has suffered multiple dictatorships, foreign invasions and economic crises yet has emerged triumphant. Dominicans have been proceeding along a winding road to democracy and development since General Trujillo was assassinated (with the help of the United States) in 1961. The road has been paved with patronage and great inequality, but is headed in the right direction -- democracy has emerged. The country has integrated into the globalized world, experienced multiple spans of record economic growth, and become a key trading partner with the United States. It recovered strongly from the domestic economic crisis of 2003 and is expected to do the same in response to the current international economic crisis.

The Dominican Republic has experienced tremendous change over the last several decades. It long followed Latin American tradition with a triumvirate of power (oligarchy, church, and military). That is no longer so. After two American interventions and many decades of dictatorship and authoritarian “democracy,” the Dominican Republic is maturing into a unique democratic state. Economic diversification has diminished the once dominant agriculture sector to less than 12 percent of the national gross domestic product. (The World Bank, 2007) The land-holding oligarchs have gone into business and maintained a position at the top of society—albeit a somewhat diminished one. Meanwhile, the church and military have declined in power, but continue to act as arbiter and counterbalance to the state, respectively.

Although much has changed, Dominicans continue to live in a society characterized by family connections, patronage, and strict class divisions based on race and socioeconomic status. Despite great leaps in economic growth, a severe income gap remains, as a very large segment of the population still does not have access to even the most basic necessities of life. Although the country at this time appears on an upward trajectory of democratic development in many regards, corruption remains rampant. After all, patronage is the grease that oils the institutions of the Dominican Republic. It remains to be seen whether a society that has long preferred public handouts to public service is ready for drastic change in this regard.

Colonialism to Short-Lived Independence

Hispaniola was discovered by Columbus in 1492. The Spanish soon established Santo Domingo (now the Dominican capital) as their first capital in the New World. As agriculture and mining took off, Spain built churches, schools and hospitals. Through disease as well as arms the Spanish quickly eliminated most natives on the island and imported slaves from Africa. Over the next fifty years the colony received an influx of Spaniards and built a racially-based, two-class authoritarian system.

The early years of a state-run extraction economy quickly depleted the colony's mineral supply. The next two hundred years were marked by economic decline and social/political disarray as the Spanish, French, British, and pirates from the Netherlands competed for control of the island. The Spanish ceded the western third of the island to the French in 1697.

At the outset of the nineteenth century Santo Domingo's economy lagged far behind that of its western neighbor, Saint-Dominique (now Haiti), then the largest sugar producer in the world. The French colony's large slave population began to revolt in 1793. Soon thereafter former slaves from Saint--Dominique invaded Santo Domingo. In response, Spain sent forces in 1809 to occupy Santo Domingo and prevent a slave revolt there. After several years of weak Spanish rule, the colony declared independence in 1821. No sooner did the Dominican Republic break free than the newly independent Haiti invaded and seized control. The Haitians began to modernize the sugar industry and freed the slaves. They also redistributed the land and drove out the Spanish elites. These moves greatly upset the Catholic Church, which owned most of the former colony's land, and led Santo Domingo to declare independence from Haiti in 1844.

The first two decades of Dominican independence were marked by repeated coups and Haitian invasions. Then, in 1861 the Spanish re-annexed their former colony. The Dominican Republic declared independence again in 1865 and power shifted between parties until Ulises Heureaux's dictatorship in 1882 provided stability and modernization. This modernization put the country into great debt.

The First American Intervention

After Heureaux's assassination in 1899 the United States feared an European intervention aimed at collecting debts. Consequently, the United States took control of Dominican customs receipts in 1905 and began economic restructuring in 1915. One year later U.S. Marines invaded to quell increasing political instability and depose the anti-American faction in power. Until their 1924 departure the marines built infrastructure, trained a Dominican army, and established the procedures for democratic government. The U.S. troops brought great advances in many areas,

from health and sanitation to roads and education. They left behind a nation obsessed with baseball, one that in time produced major league greats such as Pedro Martinez, Manny Ramírez, and Sammy Soza. They also left behind a fledgling electoral democracy and a well trained army under General Rafael Trujillo.

The Trujillo Years

In 1930, soon after the United States withdrew, Trujillo wrested power from the weak democratic government of President Horacio Vázquez. Trujillo immediately established a semi-fascist, totalitarian dictatorship that is widely regarded as the most repressive in Latin American history. He wielded a heavy and often brutal hand in all aspects of Dominican society for thirty years. He controlled the food supply and was responsible for sordid crimes ranging from forced prostitution to murder. In 1937 he ordered the massacre of thousands of Haitians along the Dominican border. This massacre marked the beginning of an anti-African and anti-animist nationalist ideology, which the leading intellectuals of the day, Joaquín Balaguer and Manuel Arturo Peña Battle, contended was essential for the maintenance of independence and protection of the Haitian border. These same intellectuals helped Trujillo construct a corporatist system in which the government created state--sponsored, -regulated, and -controlled business, labor, and other groups to help regiment the citizenry.

The 1959 Castro Revolution in Cuba sparked fear in the United States that rising opposition against Trujillo would culminate in another socialist revolution in the Dominican Republic. With U.S. support a group of assassins killed Trujillo in 1961. This was the beginning of the Dominican transition, with U.S. assistance, to democracy. However, there was no contingency plan in place and the political system spun into crisis.

The Second American Intervention

Trujillo's puppet president, Joaquín Balaguer, assumed control of the state following the dictator's assassination, but was replaced by elected leftist Juan Bosch in 1962. A military coup removed Bosch from power and quickly led to civil war. The United States' fear that a socialist government would emerge victorious prompted another U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965. Leading scholars contend that this fear was unfounded given that the rebels leading the revolt supported both democracy and the United States. (Kryzanek, 1996) After a year of fighting, the U.S. peacekeepers and the Dominican factions reached an agreement that called for elections. This imposed reconciliation between Dominicans led to U.S. withdrawal.

The Balaguer Years

Balaguer, a conservative, was elected in a 1966 violence-ridden election. He brought stability to the country. The United States contributed millions of dollars to his administration while turning a blind eye to his practices of clientelism and political repression. The 1978 election replaced Balaguer's corrupt government with the candidate favored by the Carter Administration, Antonio Guzmán. Four years later Jorge Blanco won on an anticorruption message, but did not follow through. He also failed to make good on his promise to never accept an IMF package. In 1984 he reached an agreement with the IMF that brought on mass riots and subsequent police brutality.

Balaguer was consequently returned to power in the 1986 election. He won the next two elections amid accusations of electoral fraud. This time his still authoritarian regime governed with less violence. He closed the economy despite the trend of liberalization spreading throughout Latin America. He invested in infrastructure and espoused an anti-Haitian nationalist

ideology characterized by consistent police harassment of Haitian workers. Despite his authoritarian rule and election fraud Balaguer was considered by many to be a strong leader and father figure. Not only did he establish stability and promote modernization, he was known to garner support in the countryside by handing out money to passersby. In the end, the 1994 election irregularities aroused so much domestic and international opposition that a constitutional amendment was passed to prevent the president from seeking reelection. Nonagenarian Balaguer was also forced to serve only two years of his term.

Consolidating Democracy and Economic Development

The 1996 election that followed brought Leonel Fernández to power. Already on the upward path, the Dominican economy took off under the Fernández administration through diversification. The undeveloped and traditional sugar-dependent economy gave way to a sustained average growth rate of over 7 percent. It even surpassed the growth rates of the newly industrialized countries of East Asia. The constitution, however, prevented Fernández from seeking reelection for a second term in 2000. Despite the candidacy of an aging Balaguer, power was yielded to the opposition party of Hipólito Mejía. Growth was sustained for two years under the new administration, although at a lower rate of 3 to 4 percent.

A devastating banking crisis brought this positive trend to a halt in 2003. It was discovered that the country's largest banks were engaged in rampant fraudulent activity that involved government officials and members of competing political parties alike. The Mejía administration's failure to prosecute those involved evoked widespread public protest. A government bailout of the banks that diverted a huge share of the national budget began a sharp economic decline. Inflation soared, business confidence dropped, and capital flight began. The

cost of living increased exponentially as salaries decreased. Public unrest ensued. In response, Mejía took control of several media outlets. He also doubled the size of the military, reinstated and increased the pensions of retired officers and issued large numbers of motorcycles, helicopters, and cars to the military.

Despite Mejía's apparent attempts to buy off the armed forces and limit negative press as he campaigned for re-election, he conceded defeat in the 2004 election and transferred power peacefully. Leonel Fernández was elected to a second, nonconsecutive term on promises to increase government transparency and restore the prosperity of the 1990s. President Fernández succeeded in this regard by returning the country to significant growth -- 10.7 percent GDP growth in 2006 and 8.5 percent GDP growth in 2007.

By 2007 the economic and political outlook was very promising. With national gross domestic product up to \$36.7 billion (more than triple that of the early eighties), literacy up to 89 percent, and a rural population of less than one-third, the Dominican Republic was well on its way to modernization. (The World Bank, 2007) To top it all off, a peaceful exchange of power through three elections (1996, 2000, and 2004) placed Dominicans in the company of maturing democracies.

Unfortunately, the positive economic trend was reversed amidst the international financial crisis of 2008 and 2009. With its strong dependence on the United States economy for remittances and foreign direct investment, the Dominican Republic has suffered greatly at the hand of the United States recession. Further, the Dominican agriculture sector was devastated and 80,000 Dominicans were displaced by tropical storms Noel and Olga in 2007. President Fernández increased food subsidies to alleviate suffering from the subsequent food crisis and

continues to supply natural gas subsidies for cooking. All of this spending has placed great strains on a government budget already stretched thin with decreased revenues.

President Fernández was reelected to a third (second consecutive) term in 2008. However, the financial crisis and recent allegations of corruption within his government, although not against him directly, have somewhat bruised his image. That said, at printing, headlines have emerged that the Dominican economy is stabilizing and growth is predicted for 2010, although at much lower levels than previous years. In addition, indicators of democratic development continue to rise, despite the stress natural disasters and financial crises have placed on the political system. (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009)

Here we have a case of a country since independence in 1844 of weak institutions, great instability, and only about ten years of relatively effective government. If we consider Trujillo's assassination in 1961 and the subsequent political opening as the beginning of the Dominican Republic's transition to democracy, then that transition has been a very long one—forty-five years so far—and it is still incomplete and nonconsolidated. The Dominican Republic case shows that transitions to democracy in countries based on clan rivalries, patronage politics, and weak civil society and institutions can be very long indeed.

Civil Society

State-society relations in the Dominican Republic are characterized by class divisions, personality politics, and clientelism. The primary interest groups include extended family groups, the military, the Catholic Church, economic elites, the middle class, students, and organized

labor. In addition to these domestic groups the United States has tremendous influence on public policy. (Wiarda and Kryzanek, 1992)

Class relations are based not only on socioeconomic status but also on race. The upper class is comprised primarily of Dominicans of white or European descent. Mulattos form the middle class. The lowest class includes black -Dominicans descended from African slaves as well as Haitian immigrants. Those of European descent have historically dominated society, politics, and the economy. However, some black Dominicans have been able to work their way up, primarily through the military.

While the lowest 20 percent of the population earns only 4 percent of the nation's income, the highest 20 percent earns 57 percent. (The United Nations, 2007/2008) This income gap translates into a deep divide between the political interests of the upper class and those of the lower classes. The interests of the upper class include trade, relations with the United States, the tourism industry, and social connections. In stark contrast and despite the significant improvements of the 1990s, the lower class is interested primarily in basic quality of life improvements. Although the urban poor are more likely to participate in the political process, it is the rural poor who are much worse off, with significantly lower literacy rates, life expectancies, and income.

It is important to also note the emerging middle class, which has grown to nearly 40 percent of the population since the economic boom of the 1990s. This group is politically divided. The upper-middle class is made up of businessmen and high-ranking military officers who tend to be politically conservative. The mid-middle class includes professionals, military officers, university students, and government midlevel managers, who also tend to be conservative, albeit less so. The lower-middle class is comprised of workers whose political

leanings fluctuate between conservative and reformist politics, depending on the economic climate of the day.

Another defining characteristic of state-society relations is the centrality of extended family groups in politics and economics. Old family rivalries and clientelistic exchanges of favors shape even the most far-reaching national policies. This is facilitated by the reality that those in power are usually interrelated on one level or another. From political parties to civil-military relations, family ties play an even greater role than policy issues and political ideology.

The oligarch-church-military triumvirate no longer holds the reins of power as it did in times past. The power of the Dominican military has decreased drastically in recent decades. It does, however, continue to ensure that its interests are served by the civilians in power. Given the Dominican history of military occupation, those civilians are always conscious of the military's ability to take the reins of power by force. Contrary to that of Western armed forces, the role of the Dominican military is not one of national defense. Instead, it serves as a political apparatus for its own self-preservation, self--enrichment, and the maintenance of social order. Once active in the foreground, its political machinations now take place primarily in the background. As recently as 2002 President Mejía provided financial incentives and resources to the military in an effort to secure its support. Further, the military's support of democracy is highly dependent on their satisfaction with salaries and perks. To this day rumors of impending coups are common and officers are known to facilitate drug trafficking through the Haitian border. In 2009 the Fernández administration forced more than 500 military officers to retire as a consequence for aiding drug trafficking and/or perpetrating acts of domestic violence. These are steps in the right direction for democratic consolidation, but much remains to be done to clean up military corruption.

The Dominican Catholic Church has also traditionally been a power broker in Dominican politics. For many years the Church supported the brutal Trujillo regime and told parishioners how to vote. But a lack of resources and personnel has diminished the Church's current influence on voting and public policy. Although the Church's strength has declined significantly in recent decades, the Dominican Republic is still a Catholic country and the Church still plays a significant role in education and society. Successful Church mediation of election irregularities and political disputes are but two examples.

Just as the military and Church have declined in power, so too has the oligarchic pillar of the power triumvirate. The small landed oligarchy that once governed the Dominican Republic does so no more. The oligarchs did, however, go into business and, consequently, continue to have significant influence on the affairs of state. It was the business groups they formed that played a central role in the 1963 overthrow of Bosch's democratic government. Their influence has only grown since then as they have organized into a chamber of commerce and various business associations. Not only are they well connected and wealthy but the well-being of the Dominican economy depends on their success.

Organized labor seeks to influence public policy but is far less influential than it was in days past. The labor movement was long kept at bay under the authoritarian dictatorship of Trujillo. Following his assassination it became an important player in Dominican politics. Another period of suppression followed the revolution, but the booming economy of the 1990s reestablished the opportunity for organized labor to become a significant political player. The effectiveness of the eight confederations that comprise the labor movement is now diminished not from external forces but through internal division and competition.

The once prominent political role played by students has likewise lessened in recent years. After contributing significantly to the political transformation of the 1960s and the establishment of a more competitive democracy in the late 1970s, students have become decreasingly involved in politics and more oriented toward moving up the social/economic ladder. The major universities still serve as a platform for debate and students still participate in political protests on occasion; however, students are now far more focused on economic advancement than they were in the long-gone 1970s when they incited political violence in protest against the repressive Balaguer regime.

As the political influence of the above groups has decreased over time, that of civil society has risen. Despite a conflict-ridden lead-up to the 1998 and 2000 elections, as well as the economic crisis that preceded the 2004 election and the tropical storms that wreaked havoc before the 2008 election, all recent elections went off without major incident. This victory for free and fair elections is due in part to the legitimizing effects of a large international observation presence. However, it is also the result of a civil society that has recently begun to thrive. In recent decades Dominican nongovernmental organizations have secured the attention and responsiveness of the country's leadership and they have done so in a very creative way. Although the Dominican Republic is progressing toward democratic maturity, it still runs largely on patronage and clientelism. Consequently, Dominican civil society stimulates grassroots activism, then when either local or national institutions serve as impediments to change it employs the old patronage practices to secure its aims. Although this may be criticized as only partial democracy, it works. New social groups now have more of a say because they have found the way to secure the ear of the leadership first through mobilization, then through patronage. (Choup, 2003)

Finally, the United States plays a major role in domestic Dominican policy-making. Although some anti-American sentiment followed the long military occupations, many Dominicans view the United States as a protector and benefactor. The Dominican Republic is one of the few countries where the Washington Consensus has proven a successful approach to development. The who's who of Dominican society frequent American embassy parties and the United States ambassador has tremendous access to and influence over Dominican policymakers. It must also be noted, however, that the Dominican Republic has likewise learned how to secure its interests from the United States. This small Caribbean state is a large market for U.S. products, with \$6.5 billion in imports from the U.S. in 2008. (U.S. Trade Representative, 2009) There are also hundreds of thousands of Dominican citizens who live in the United States and send a total of over \$2 billion in remittances home each year. In addition, a large American citizen population resides in the Dominican Republic and is active in banking, business, religious groups, and educational institutions. These three factors significantly empower the Dominican lobby in Washington, D.C.

In sum, power still rests in the hands of the few. The economic elites, the military, well-connected civil society groups, and the United States have the greatest influence. The church, university students, and organized labor play a significant, albeit lesser, role. Unfortunately, the impoverished masses are still excluded from the equation. Perhaps the emerging civil society will take on the plight of and make a difference for the least fortunate bottom rung of Dominican society. A couple of organizations have attempted to do so in recent years in the education and health care arenas. However, secondary school enrollment remains just above 50 percent and infant mortality rates average approximately twenty-six deaths per one thousand births (as

compared to deaths in the low single digits in Western Europe and North America). (The United Nations, 2007/2008) There is still much to be done.

USAID in the Dominican Republic

U.S. development assistance to the Dominican Republic grew exponentially following the assassination of General Trujillo in 1961. In contrast to a \$200,000 technical assistance program that was provided to the Dominican Republic in the 1950s, President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress jumpstarted a bilateral Dominican development aid program that spent hundreds of millions of dollars throughout the 1960s. (USAID, 1973)

The early post-Trujillo development programs of the 1960s included loans and technical assistance grants that prioritized increased production in the agriculture sector. USAID operated more as a grantor and policy promoter than as a project administrator at the time. (USAID, 1973) It focused on providing credit to small farmers and increasing the technical analytical capacity of the Dominican Agriculture Secretariat. USAID also targeted assistance toward public health in the form of family planning and nutrition education, nutritional supplements, building health care facilities, training health care personnel, and advocating health administration reform. Smaller sums were provided to improve education and increase public safety through police assistance. (USAID, 1965 and 1973)

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, USAID continued to prioritize development of the agriculture sector, public health and education. In the 1970s it also provided assistance for the development of a national communications system, the construction and repair of rural roads,

and energy production. These programs continued throughout the 1980s, while assistance was also provided for the prevention of AIDS, hurricane reconstruction, small business development, graduate management training and educational exchange programs with the United States, the economic empowerment of women, and the privatization of state enterprise. (USAID, 1973 and 1987)

It was not until the 1990s, toward the end of the authoritarian Balaguer regime, that assistance was directly allocated to democratic development programs. Assistance continued to target public health, education, micro-enterprise, privatization, rural finance, road construction, trade diversification, agriculture technology, and narcotics education.¹¹ In addition, USAID democracy assistance in its modern form began with the multinational 1990 election observation. By 1992, USAID began a 10-year democracy assistance program aimed at increasing the democratic culture of the Dominican Republic through civic participation, government efficiency, and government impartiality projects. (USAID, 1993)

The following sections will examine the extent to which these USAID civil society assistance programs were aimed at capacity-building, the quality of their program evaluations, and whether or not the programs contributed to democratic development in the Dominican Republic. Programs will be considered that were implemented between 1992 and 2002.

¹¹ By the early 2000s, USAID development assistance averaged approximately US\$30 million per year -- democracy assistance accounts for but about one fifth of that. (USAID, 2006 and 2010)

**USAID-Dominican Republic Civil Society Assistance Program Activities
and Evaluations (1992-2002)**

Democratic Initiatives Project

USAID funded the Democratic Initiatives Project (PID) from 1992 to 2002, as part of a larger *Strengthening Civil Society Project*. DevTech Systems, Inc., subcontractor of Checchi & Company Consulting, Inc., was commissioned by USAID in 2001 to assess its ten-year *Strengthening Civil Society Project* in the Dominican Republic.¹² DevTech concluded that the entire project was a success.

The PID part of the project implemented 203 initiatives throughout the country, with greatest investment in urban centers. The PID activities focused on decentralization, municipal government strengthening, civic education, gender activities, and the farming sector. There were 8,824 Dominican participants in the program over the course of ten years (two-thirds of which were female). In contrast to the Haiti programs' American NGO subgrantees, the PID subgrantees were Dominican NGOs.

The "PID projects aimed at democratic and civic education did not necessarily seek immediate and observable institutional changes. Rather they sought: to build institutional networks and associations that may advocate and implement the programs; to develop and

¹² DevTech Systems, Inc. is a private consulting firm that was founded in 1984. Its headquarters are in Arlington Virginia. DevTech provides technical assistance for development projects. Although it has consulted on projects in 100 countries, it got its start on projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition to their consulting work, DevTech manages the USAID Economic and Social Database. Checchi & Company Consulting, Inc. is a private consulting firm based in Washington, D.C. Checchi has managed 250 USAID contracts as well as provided services to the World Bank, African Development Bank, and Asian Development Bank. They are known for their program design, monitoring, and evaluation expertise.

disseminate appropriate materials and methods; and to generate the infrastructure of values and attitudes necessary to sustain democracy and attain its long-term enhancement.” (2002, p.27-28)

PID Training sessions on democratic values covered topics such as, “rotation of leadership, promotion of participation in general, ethnic tolerance, understanding of gender issues, and tolerance of dissent.” (2002, p.3) PID training sessions on group skills and procedures covered topics such as, “codifying and managing internal regulations, parliamentary procedures, preparing agendas and action plans, keeping minutes and maintaining financial accounts.” (2002, p. 4) DevTech contended that, “Acquiring these abilities through the PID has strengthened the management of civil society organizations and improved the capacities of other subgrantee groups in achieving their goals. In addition, the training has created a more orderly democratic environment within the organizations” (2002, p.4)

Through PID assistance and funding, a consortia of four Dominican NGOs was formed that represented interests in municipal level engagement, civic education in schools, and “state institutionalism through promoting civil and administrative careers within state entities and farmer organization to enact a law to protect farmers.” (2002, p.4)

As part of its study, DevTech collected data and examined differences between the general population and participants in the PID program. The data included indicators of average education levels, income levels, activism, and membership in grassroots organizations, as well as political attitudes, values, and practices.

What the DevTech study did well is that it collected individual-level data. Their survey data revealed that program participants are on average more interested in politics than the general population. Participants are more likely to read, discuss, listen to or watch news on politics than the general population. Participants are also much more likely to participate in community

meetings, attend political party meetings, try to convince others to vote for their favorite candidates, protest, or participate in strikes. They also found that PID participants trust the electoral system more and are more likely to look unfavorably upon clientelism and abuse of power. Participants are also less likely to support presidential reelection and more likely to support constitutional reform.

However, no pre-training baseline surveys were completed by individual program participants. The survey results indicate that program participants were on average more educated, politically and socially engaged, and actively pursuing democratic reform than the general population. However, the absence of baseline data makes it impossible to determine if these types of people self-selected themselves into the program or if their attitudes and levels of political and community commitment increased as a result of the program. DevTech acknowledges the absence of baseline data, but concludes that, “it is possible to state that the differences in attitudes, values, and political practices are to due to a synergy effect between the PID’s interventions and a subpopulation that is more educated, political, and socially committed than the average voting population of the country.” (2002, p.5) In essence, the USAID-commissioned report tries to draw a loose connection between democracy assistance and change in participant behavior and attitudes, but the evidence it produces does not support this notion. In addition, when compared to a general population survey conducted in 1997, there appears to be a decline in participation in traditional political activities from 1997 to 2001 and no change in the number of civil society organizations that respondents participate in.

That said, survey and focus group results do indicate that, “Eight of ten participants report that their way of thinking changed as a result of their participation in the programs. Most of them say the programs have had an impact on their family life. The impact inside the

community organizations is mainly reported as an increase of internal democracy within the associations and the forming of alliances. Among political activists, one-third reports an important increase in democratic practices of political parties.” (2002, p. 25) This is represented in the table below.

Table 8.1 “Perception of the population who have benefited from the impact of the PID in their personal lives, associations, workplace, political parties they are active in and schools where they study or work, and their municipalities, ENPID 2001” (Copied from DevTech 2002, p.120)

IMPACT	<u>Way of Thinking</u>		<u>Family Relations</u>		<u>Internal Democracy of the Group</u>		<u>Alliances between Groups</u>	
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
Much	81.1	780	58.8	562	63.9	587	41.1	351
Little	16.3	157	34.5	329	30.5	280	45.3	387
Almost none	1.2	12	5.2	50	3.6	33	8.8	75
Does not know/Refuses	1.4	13	1.5	14	2.1	19	4.8	41
Does not apply	--	0	--	7	--	43	--	108
Total	100.0	962	100.0	962	100.0	100.0	100.0	962
IMPACT	<u>Municipal Participation</u>		<u>Democracy in the Workplace</u>		<u>Democracy in School/ University</u>		<u>Democracy in the Political Party of Militancy</u>	
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
Much	43.8	398	47.2	298	20.6	53	35.3	109
Little	43.6	396	41.5	262	24.9	64	44.7	138
Almost none	7.7	70	8.2	52	7.4	19	13.3	41
Does not know/refuses	4.8	44	3.0	19	47.1	121	6.8	21
Does not apply	--	54	--	331	--	705	--	653
Total	100.0	962	100.0	962	100.0	962	100.0	962

In all, DevTech found that the PID was an “exemplary” program because it brought representatives “of organized segments of Dominican society” into the project decision making process throughout its duration. DevTech reported that the project helped to increase cooperation among many civil society groups, and provided “effective” training in democratic values. However, the report questioned the sustainability of 2002 levels of civil society capacity and activism. USAID funded PID for a decade. Given that there is a minimal philanthropic tradition or tax incentive in place to encourage domestic funding of such organizations, sustainability is unlikely. (2002, p. 38)

DevTech also made an “indirect” assessment of impact – meaning an assessment of grassroots organizations, instead of individual participants. They asked survey and focus group questions to create an “Index of the Institutionalization of Associations.” The indicators included: legal standing, frequency/consistency of Executive Committee meetings, frequency/consistency of General Assembly meetings, affiliation with other groups, use of agendas for meetings, keeping of accounting records, and existence of internal written standards for the association. Data on indicators of the democratization of grassroots organizations were also collected, including on: internal executive selection practices, influence of political parties on leadership selection, openness of votes, nomination procedures, the frequency of leadership reelection, and the level of participatory decision-making by members when compared to leaders. Data was also collected on the methods used to solve community needs and/or problems.

In addition, the study surveyed perception of organizational achievements within the year prior to the survey. Achievements were operationalized in terms of internal democratization and

organizational development, alliance creation, participation in politics, and the achievement of community development projects (e.g, construction of a town hall). However no distinction was made between associations that received assistance from PID and those that did not. The surveys were conducted only in 2001, so no comparative change over time was observed. Although this organizational level data could be very valuable in a sound assessment, baseline data is necessary for comparison and attribution of causation of change to democracy assistance.

Participación Ciudadana

Participación Ciudadana (PC) was established as an advocacy group in 1993 to advocate on behalf of fair elections and then later became a key organizer of election observation activities. It is an always has been an overtly politically biased organization. USAID was not the initial direct source of funding for PC. Instead, PC originally received funding from the NED and then the PID (which itself was funded by USAID) and other Dominican organizations, until it gained legal status in 1997. USAID began to fund PC directly in 1997 with an initial five year grant of US \$9.4 million, titled, “Strengthening Civil Society II Project.”

Before it received funding directly from USAID, however, PC was instrumental in connecting USAID to civil society organizations throughout the country and recruiting thousands of observers for the 1996 elections. USAID provided institutional support to PC in order to perpetuate its election monitoring efforts through the 1998 local and congressional elections and the 2000 presidential elections. USAID also provided funding for advocacy, civic education and media campaigns directed toward democratic reform. PC was expected to use USAID funds to bring together Dominican civil society organizations to advocate for reform. Four years after its

founding, PC expanded from a Santo Domingo-based operation to a national organization. With USAID funds, PC provided training and deployed over 10,000 volunteers. Volunteers were trained “on electoral laws, rules, and methods of observation.” (DevTech 2002, p.147). The 1998 and 2000 elections were deemed free and fair, despite low voter turnout – a significant step forward for democracy when compared to the disputed elections of 1990 and 1994.

PC has been criticized within Dominican society as an elite-based organization, and DevTech acknowledged that there is some legitimacy to this claim. However, DevTech contended that PC reached out beyond its elite core constituency to a cross section of society when it established the *Red de Observadores Electorales* and the *Foro Ciudadano* coalition of civil society and grassroots organizations. As dissatisfaction grew with political parties (with internal party disputes, attempts by the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) – which won in the 1998 elections – to establish a friendly electoral board, and the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) and the Social Christian Reformist Party (PRSC) attempts to reverse judicial reforms in the wake of their upset loss to the PRD) Dominicans increasingly turned to PC’s coalition of civil society organizations as vehicles for civic engagement. This was especially so for females and younger voters and represented a tremendous shift away from traditional Dominican personality-based party politics.

The evaluation contends, “The technical capabilities and know-how achieved in great measure as a result of USAID financial support has been critical to the political legitimacy and credibility of PC” and by extension, its coalition of civil society groups that have become increasingly prominent in Dominican politics. Further, the evaluation contends that, “The training of electoral observers and the accuracy of the quick counts (both costly programs) have

served to substantiate the nonpartisan nature of PC.” (2002, p. 150) Although this may be true, the evaluation provides little evidence substantiating this claim.

Perhaps the most compelling finding of DevTech’s surveys was that 83% of participants trained for election observation by PC through USAID funding said that they “had never before participated in political activities.” (2002, p.150) Certainly it is not safe to assume, as USAID often does, that greater engagement through civil society groups is always positive for democracy. But, in this case it would be very hard to convincingly argue against the fact that the election observers trained in mass by USAID’s program restored confidence in the electoral system and should be credited in large part for the free and fair elections that took place. Because the vast majority of participants in the observer training programs had never before participated in politics, it is safe to conclude that USAID did strengthen individual capacity that resulted in at least immediate democracy-building behavior among approximately 8,000 participants. It remains to be determined, however, whether or not such behavior was repeated over time by those same individuals without the support of USAID.

The evaluation clearly views USAID’s assistance as effective individual, organizational, and sub-state-civil society capacity building in terms of election observation. However, it notes repeatedly that the sustainability of such new capacity is questionable given the paucity of PC’s organizational administrative capacity, and fundraising efforts or opportunities. These sentiments are reflected in the following statement and repeatedly throughout the report,

The programs funded by USAID have certainly contributed to strengthening the capacity of institutions of Dominican civil society to plan and execute actions. The role of civil society organizations in election monitoring is the stellar example. Civil society

organizations are now decisive actors in national politics. PC, in particular, has a high profile in political debates and is frequently seen as the “symbol” of civil society. PC capacity to continue in the future with a strong reform agenda will in part depend on its financial sustainability and on its ability to clearly define its goals and role as a civil society organization.” (2002, p.153)

DevTech also contends that PC has introduced citizen participation in Dominican politics for the first time, beyond political parties and the patronage-based politics of campaigns and government. Hence, the evaluation claims that USAID funding resulted in a complete transformation, at least in the short term, of Dominican politics that reached across social groups and classes. In addition, PC adopted an electoral reform agenda and succeeded in securing changes in electoral rules. It is clear that this would not have occurred to the extent it did without USAID funding. Therefore it is safe to conclude that the program did build capacity at least in the short term. However, as with election observation it remains to be determined if this will lead to long term change. Even DevTech notes that, “Unless civil society fills the void in analysis and advocacy created by the patronage-based programs of government and political parties, the politics of the past could easily remain or return.” (2002, p. 157) Given the fact that patronage is and has always been central to every facet of Dominican politics, it is likely that PC may have increased the level of citizen engagement in politics without putting a dent in the clientelistic status quo. In addition, the evaluation report never acknowledges the clear political bias of PC, nor does it question the extent to which USAID provided assistance to civil society groups across the political spectrum or only to groups of a particular political leaning.

Fundación Institucinalidad y Justicia

Fundación Institucinalidad y Justicia (FINJUS) is a Dominican think tank that received USAID funds beginning in 1995 for standalone projects (not a typical grant or cooperative agreement). With an inconsistent paper trail of funds or projects and high FINJUS turnover, the evaluator found it difficult to track USAID expenditures. It was ultimately able to collect programmatic evidence through interviews and project lists and receipts that FINJUS supplied. Although FINJUS was the primary organization with which USAID worked to implement its multimillion dollar rule of law assistance programs,

“In most cases, USAID took advantage of windows of opportunity and supported tactical activities that generally stand alone. Due to this approach, a systematic follow up of funded activities rarely took place. This approach also made it difficult to identify clearly those results primarily attributable to USAID support, and to measure their level of impact, particularly as there were no previously defined indicators or benchmarks for either impact or performance. (2002, p.159)

Within FINJUS, interviewees perceived USAID funding as positive. An unspecified number of respondents contended that it allowed their organization to be more actively engaged in justice reform. However, perception among the Dominican public was that, similarly to PC, only elites benefited.

In 1996 and 1997 USAID funded several seminars hosted by the Fernández administration’s new Commission to Reform and Modernize Justice, which included members of civil society organizations, unions, the Bar Association, and the Supreme Court. The seminars

sought consensus on a judicial reform agenda and published their recommendations. However, there was little follow through. Then in 2000, USAID funded an assessment of the judiciary and judicial reform that was intended to “pressure the political parties to keep judicial reform on their political agenda,” in the lead-up to the 2000 election. (2002, p.162)

From 1995 through 1997, USAID also funded a public defense program, implemented by FINJUS to provide public defenders to low income criminal defendants. The program trained public defenders who “closed” 435 cases. This program was a follow up to earlier Dominican programs created by the Universidad Nacional Pedro Henricue Ureñas (UNPHU) and *Latin American Institute of the United Nations for the prevention of Crime and Treatment of Criminals* ILANUD that had closed due to lack of funds.

Though USAID viewed its FINJUS program as a success, it discontinued funding. It hoped the government would institutionalize the program, but it did not until 1998, 6 months after USAID discontinued support. In 1998 the Dominican government allocated funds to the Public Defense program and USAID continued to provide funds for defender training, but the trainees were soon thereafter replaced by the new administration for political reasons. The program was nearly cut, “however, USAID intervention at the highest political levels helped secure new funding.” (2002, p.163) It is important to note that this was an effort by USAID to lobby the government and had nothing to do with the “capacity-building” operating theory that this dissertation expected to find. In addition, it is obvious that the impact of these USAID lobbying efforts were negligible.

Ultimately, the government established a National Office of Public Defense in the Justice Reform Commissioner’s Office, with offices throughout the country. The governing party selected the public defenders from within its ranks and USAID once again funded training of

another new set of defenders. DevTech concluded that the politically driven high turnover among public defenders limited the success of the program, insofar as the number of inmates awaiting trial was not reduced and the program was minimally institutionalized within the government.

USAID also worked along the sidelines to garner government support for civil society participation in the process of Supreme Court Justice selection from 1994 through 2001. Although it is not exactly clear what USAID did in this regard, it is safe to assume that they lobbied the government and counseled FINJUS to do the same. Again, this was not a capacity-building endeavor on the part of USAID. Throughout several years of no selections due to political party disputes, and repeated efforts by government officials to minimize transparency of the process and the independence of selectees, local businesses funded civil society efforts to increase transparency and judicial independence. They succeeded in terms of increased transparency of many steps throughout the selection process, but ultimately the judges recommended by civil society groups were not selected. This was not surprising to the Dominican citizenry, as, “Fully 98.9 percent of those polled [for the Dev Tech evaluation] considered that politicians ‘always’ or ‘almost always’ take advantage of public positions for their own and not the public’s benefit.” (2002, p.165)

In sum, in its efforts to increase independence in the rule of law, USAID took a markedly different approach from its usual capacity building efforts. Instead, it actively lobbied government officials and played an advisory role to FINJUS, PC, and The Dominican Association of Young Business Persons (ANJE) - who received funds from primarily local sources. As DevTech notes,

During the process, USAID provided support in an active but discrete way. It quietly lobbied at the highest political levels to back the efforts of the civil society coalition, and provided technical assistance when it was requested. Low-profile USAID intervention in this case proved to be effective. Promotion of judicial independence was a national issue of tremendous importance, and without the efforts of civil society judicial independence would have been totally at the mercy of the political parties. (2002, p. 165)

USAID funds were also provided to the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) – an American NGO - which provided consultants who examined criminal justice procedures and made recommendations for improvement in several workshops and publications. The result was a new draft Criminal Procedures Code. Regional members of the Dominican legal community and experts from Latin American countries that had implemented significant criminal justice reforms participated in the workshops.

In addition, USAID provided funding through the NCSC for technical assistance and equipment for the Prosecutors Office for the National District, in an effort to increase organizational capacity, expertise and the protection of battered women. However, DevTech notes that because the Prosecutors Office is part of the Executive branch, it is constantly pressured by the political parties in power and each new administration brings total turnover. After prosecutorial reform efforts were derailed for several months, USAID provided funding to FINJUS to launch a campaign to reinvigorate interest. FINJUS held a “Public Ministry Week” in which the Attorney General and other high level officials participated. As a result, a reform proposal was brought up for consideration by congress that would establish an independent

prosecutorial function. However, the effort remained highly politicized. (DevTech, 2002, p. 167-8)

USAID also provided funds to FINJUS and the Latin American College of Social Sciences in 1999 to hold seminars “on the role of the police in a democratic society.” (DevTech 2002, p.168) The police in the Dominican Republic are known for being the greatest violators of human rights in the country, as many criminal suspects die before trial. In addition, police under prosecution for brutality are subject to police tribunals that are biased in their favor. Several Dominican NGOs joined together on their own in a class action suit to petition the Supreme Court to rule that such tribunals are unconstitutional. However, in all, USAID funds for police reform have been minimal and have consequently not likely had any substantial impact.

Other rule of law reform efforts included public consultations held by FINJUS and PC in late 2000, at the request of the Judiciary, to develop a five year judicial reform plan. The consultations included a cross-section of regions, grassroots organizations, business associations, and local officials. They considered the mission, values, ethics, and needs of the Judiciary. A Judicial Conference was then held, in which civil society representatives participated, and in which justices voted on the proposals. USAID funded some of the consultation activities and provided technical assistance. However, DevTech concluded that there was no real follow through in regards to institutionalizing the participatory nature of the process. A civil society group was formed to monitor progress, but their roles were not clearly defined.

In addition, USAID provided funds to PC (which worked in coalition with FINJUS and other groups) to sponsor popular legal education workshops (14 in 1999 and 30 in 2001) that included over 1000 participants from a regional cross-section of the country. The workshops sought to increase awareness of the role of the Judiciary, constitutional rights, judicial selection

and the prison system. However, the result of the workshops was a consensus that the judicial system is severely corrupt, unjust, biased against the poor, and unlikely to undergo reform beyond that which benefits the economic and political elite. Consequently, DevTech concluded that such projects are of little value without proper consideration of establishing mechanisms for reform advocacy.

USAID funds were also provided to civil society to fight corruption. The first Fernández Administration (1996-2000) established multiple offices designated to fight corruption but political factors precluded any corruption charges from being filed. While some charges were filed under the subsequent Mejía Administration, and officials were prosecuted, the end result has been the use of such measures as a political tool for interparty dispute. Civil society groups have not clearly defined the role they want to play in the fight against corruption, so USAID has only provided minimal support. It provided \$40,500, for example, to Action against Corruption (ACC) in 1999, created by Dominican businessmen, to host a conference in which the presidential candidates discussed their plans to combat corruption. However, ACC was unable to secure further funding and closed. DevTech contended that this was because businesses are equally corrupt and need government support to run. At the time of DevTech's report, PC and FINJUS had both pursued efforts to create a new plan and lobby against corruption, but little legislative progress has ensued.

In its final analysis, DevTech contended that some of the civil society Rule of Law activities were successful, but "their limited and sporadic nature" and lack of clearly defined objectives made their impact difficult to measure. (2002, p.174) Further, it concluded, that USAID only invested minimally in most of the Rule of Law programs and that, "The main support came from local Dominican resources, and success was the result of the commitment and

leadership of FINJUS, PC and ANJE.” (2002, p. 174) It is evident that the rule of law reform dialogue has risen significantly and reform efforts have become more inclusive of civil society, but there has been little follow through by the government to make good on the reform consensus that were reached in the various workshops, seminars, and conferences that were funded by USAID. In addition, the reform efforts have been criticized as elite-driven and USAID has been accused of always working with the same civil society organizations that do not represent the broader Dominican civil society. That said, PC 2001 poll results indicated that over two thirds of respondents felt that the administration of justice had improved in the country (a slight increase from a 1997 survey). Further, interviews of government officials lauded PC and FINJUS’ efforts to reform the Judiciary, and noted that the progress that had been made would not have been possible without them. At the same time, some interviewees contended that the NGOs had been co-opted into the politics of the system. However, DevTech contends that FINJUS and PC are widely respected throughout the country and their efforts at reform are sincere. Further, they contend that there are few viable NGO alternatives to support.

DevTech concludes that, “In order to ensure sustainability, USAID funds should not only be directed to programs to promote reform but should also focus on strengthening the institutional capacity of the cooperating civil society organizations.” (2002, p. 180) Without such capacity building, it is unlikely that all but FINJUS will be able to raise the funds to sustain operations once USAID funding subsides. In addition, the programs did not reach out to the grassroots and to provide assistance to those most in need.

Institutional Capacity Review by DevTech

The final piece of the DevTech evaluation was a review of the institutional capacity of Dominican civil society groups. Specifically, it sought to determine if, “the organizations involved in the program acquired the tools to help bring about and sustain political reform and make government at the local and national levels more responsive to grassroots needs and demands, and is that process working?” (2002, p. 185)

The review found that small NGOs spring up regularly as a result of government funds that operate as a “slush fund” for politicians to set up their own organizations. Most NGOs are paternalistic and lack a democratic organizational structure. Most associations are social instead of political, and those that are political are tiny and locally focused. Neighborhood organizations are the most common. Many of the larger and incorporated organizations have been funded by the PID. Although the interviewees did for the most part believe that the organizations need management training, USAID identified “115 not-for-profit organizations considered capable of managing projects supported by private enterprise, international donors, and philanthropic foundations.” (2002, p. 189) According to DevTech, this group is “an impressive network of organizations representing the interests of those who live on the economic, social and political margins. Most of these entities serve to aggregate and articulate the concerns of those who otherwise would have little or no input into public decision-making.” (2002, p. 189)

PID, in particular is a unique organization, because it was created by USAID. Although it is seen as effective, with a democratic organization, sound management practices, and a strong record of strengthening other NGOs within its network, it has no alternative source of funding or plan in place to secure funding from sources other than USAID beyond its 10 year grant. In

addition, the management style and operational dynamic is very personalistic and socially-motivated instead of strictly procedural. This is a reflection of Dominican culture.

PC, in contrast, is an advocacy organization. It has become increasingly formalized over time. Its programs are largely budget driven instead of mission or strategy-driven. It succeeded in its electoral reform and voter mobilization efforts but has been less successful in managing other projects funded by USAID. In other words, diversification of objectives has led to internal management problems. DevTech concluded that PC maintains a large national network of organizations and community volunteers, has a committed and professional staff of technical experts, and is a reputable organization with an impressive track record. However, its primary weakness is lack of clear direction as it moves from a focus on electoral reform to judicial reform, the establishment of a think tank, and beyond. DevTech also contended, that the great influx of USAID funding overtaxed its institutional capacity and actually undermined operational efficiency for quite some time. This has been compounded by lack of clear planning on the part of PC, including no plan to diversify its funding beyond member dues and USAID assistance. Although the evaluation argues that PC is self-sustainable through membership dues, it notes that this will only allow for subsistence and may limit the organization's effectiveness in the future.

FINJUS is the most self-sustaining of all, with its solid financial base derived from fees it charges for legal services and its private sector donor base, as well as aid from many international donors (government and corporate). That said, a Price Waterhouse evaluation found that FINJUS suffered from several managerial deficiencies, including things such as poor cash controls and inadequate computing systems. In addition, DevTech contends that the FINJUS leadership is personalistic and not democratic. Like PC, FINJUS also lacks strategic

vision. It has attempted several time to correct this, and has brought in consultants to help it do so, but little progress has been made in this regard. DevTech deemed FINJUS' administrative infrastructure as "generally weak." The evaluation consequently called for more institutional capacity strengthening.

In sum, the review of institutional capacity by DevTech concluded that the organizations funded by USAID did experience capacity growth but that each suffers from its own weaknesses. In the case of PID, it is well managed and has contributed substantially to the strengthening of civil society, but it is completely dependent on USAID for funding. PC is self-sustaining but only at the subsistence level and is plagued by lack of an unclear mission. FINJUS, also lacks clear objectives and suffers from managerial problems, but is financially self-sustaining. All of them are personalistic organizations, consistent with Dominican society.

Although the capacity review was clear to point out organizational weaknesses, it did not clearly link USAID programming to these weaknesses. The only exception was that it identified the dependency problem in regards to PID and PC funding. Hence, the evaluation sought to determine if USAID succeeded in building the NGOs organizational capacity but again did not clearly identify any causal links. It assumed that funding led to growth in some regards and noted that it led to dependency in others. Beyond calling for increased emphasis on institutional strengthening in the case of FINJUS, this organization-level evaluation does not make clear what USAID did right or what it should do differently in the future. Granted, this part of the evaluation was specifically intended to be an indirect analysis of programmatic impact. However, it focused more on organizational strengths and weaknesses without proper consideration of change over time – and most importantly without consideration of change over time that could be even indirectly attributable to USAID funding. Yet again, this part of the

evaluation fails to establish a clear causal link between assistance and institutional change, even at the organization level.

Conclusions from the Dominican Republic Case

H1. Developing democracies need foreign assistance in order to consolidate:

There is no direct discussion of this hypothesis in the USAID-sponsored evaluation report. However, it is evident that it is an operating assumption of the USAID civil society program in the Dominican Republic. The fact that USAID created an NGO (PID) through which to fund and create a network of civil society organizations supports this hypothesis. The fact that USAID funded the PID for more than a decade also supports this hypothesis. It is my view that the USAID mission takes the assumption that the Dominican Republic needs its help to consolidate its democracy as a given – their contractor does not appear to question it in the evaluation reports. Perhaps USAID itself questions this assumption in Washington, when debating the continuance of funding. However, the fact that USAID continually approved funding over the course of ten years leads me to believe that they assumed the Dominican Republic needed our help.

In addition, the evaluation does repeatedly contend that the civil society organizations which received funding from USAID are for the most part dependent on aid and would not be able to continue their pro-democracy activities without it. The recognition of the unlikelihood that the supported civil society programs would be able to continue democracy-building activity

levels that were achieved at the time the evaluation was written was an indirect acknowledgement of the Dominican need for assistance. No consideration was given to the indigenous civil society that has emerged without U.S. help. Whether or not the supported activities were essential to consolidation was not questioned or even discussed, and is not the subject of this study.

H2. *Foreign democracy assistance in the form of training, counseling, funding, and/or exchange programs increases individual capabilities (hence, opportunity) for democracy-building behavior.*

The USAID-sponsored evaluation report provided evidence that this is a clear operating assumption of USAID in the Dominican Republic. The evaluation even took great strides to determine if this assumption was correct. The evaluation contractor examined survey and focus group data and interviewed program participants to determine if the USAID civil society programs did increase individual and organizational capabilities. In comparison to the Haiti evaluation reports, the Dominican evaluation was much more methodologically sophisticated. It appeared to be a serious attempt to conduct an objective and scientific evaluation of USAID program effectiveness in terms of increasing capabilities. However, it was methodologically flawed and therefore failed to either empirically substantiate or negate this operating assumption.

Specifically, the evaluators did not have access to pre-assistance baseline data. They attempted to compare mid-program data at multiple points in time (1997 and 2001). However, they compared program participants' level of political activism, values, and capabilities with the population as a whole. This approach fails to take into account self-selection effects that would

make people who are predisposed to participate in politics and value democracy select themselves into the USAID training programs.

The most valuable data that emerged from the study were the program participants' interview responses that indicated that they perceived the USAID training programs as beneficial in terms of increasing their own understanding of democratic processes, increasing the democratic nature of the internal organization within the civil society groups to which they belonged, and improving relations in their homes. The interviewees also indicated that their level of participation in politics and their civil society groups increased at least to a limited extent as a result of their participation in the USAID training sessions. Some participants are, however, on the organizations' payrolls (which are funded at varying levels by USAID). Therefore, one must at least consider the possibility that respondents' were motivated for personal reasons to encourage USAID to continue funding and therefore their responses may not be entirely reliable. No distinction was made in the evaluation reports as to how many respondents were indirectly on the USAID payroll.

The evaluation also attempted to examine the extent to which USAID assistance increased the capacity of participating organizations.. The evaluators even named that section of the study, "Institutional Capacity Review." Although they were careful to pick objective indicators of capacity, they again failed to compare their results to any baseline data. The results indicated an increase in institutional capacity of participating organizations, but failed to explain the causal link between USAID programming and increased capacity. The link between training and changed internal organization behavior was assumed and not established. No distinction was made between the internal behavior of organization employees who participated in USAID training sessions and those who did not.

Even when examining change in organizational capacity, one must consider specifically how individual level training inputs led to individual change in behavior. Failure to do so ignores the possibility that the person(s) responsible for changing organizational policy or those who made the greatest contribution to increased organizational capacity were outside USAID's reach. It could be possible, for example, that post-training personnel turnover led to increased capacity. Although the study may have found evidence in support of a correlation between USAID funding, counseling, and training on the one hand and increased organizational capacity on the other, it did not establish causation because it failed to control (or even account) for variables that may have increased capacity but were exogenous to USAID's assistance efforts

The strongest evidence that supports the validity of this operating assumption is that PC, which was not established by but heavily funded by USAID, trained thousands of domestic election observers and succeeded in persuading the government to establish an independent election board to oversee official election preparation (including the preparation of more accurate voter lists). The training and mobilization of domestic election observers and the improved lists is widely acknowledged in the Dominican Republic as allowing for successive free and fair elections after decades of election-rigging. PC has unquestionably made a substantial contribution to Dominican electoral institutions and civic participation. With USAID funding, counseling, and training, PC has increased the capacity of electoral institutions and citizen-agents of democracy.

However, as the evaluation itself admits, the sustainability of PC's critical role in Dominican politics remains uncertain, as subsistence-only levels of domestic funding and problems with internal administration plague the organization. Further, methodological miss-steps precluded

the evaluation from finding solid evidence in support of the PID and FINJUS's capacity-building outcomes.

H3. *Participants in democracy assistance programs are willing to subsequently engage in democracy-building behavior.*

This proved to be an operating assumption of USAID's civil-society program in the Dominican Republic. It was made clear by the reports that the USAID mission believed that if it trained them, Dominican citizens would increase their levels of engagement in pro-democracy behavior. And, in fact the undeniable success of PC's election observation training and mobilization program provided strong evidence in support of USAID's operating assumption. In contrast, the evaluation's methodological problems again precluded it from finding evidence in support of participant-specific willingness to engage in democracy-building behavior, post-training.

Importantly for this study, USAID's civil society assistance that was directed at improving the rule of law in the Dominican Republic engaged primarily "on the sidelines" of its primary grantee, FINJUS. Based on my observation of the USAID mission in the Dominican Republic in 2004, it is highly likely that USAID was attempting to discretely and directly lobby Dominican officials to convince them to pass legislation to create and fund programs such as the public-defenders' office (employees of which FINJUS trained with domestic funding) and to influence the selection of federal justices. Such endeavors by the USAID mission were indirectly aimed at increasing the democratic nature of the rule of law in the country. However, USAID's lobbying efforts were more directly aimed at increasing the willingness of government

officials to change their policies. In other words, USAID was seeking to directly influence willingness to engage in pro-democracy behavior, and indirectly influence capabilities.

This revelation begs a reformulation of the operating theory proposed by this study (which assumed that USAID aimed to first and foremost increase capabilities and as a result, indirectly change domestic individual-level willingness to actively seek democratic consolidation. This will be discussed further in the following chapter.

H4. *Increased democracy-building behavior among assistance program participants leads to development at the sub-state level (e.g., civil society, rule of law, governance, etc.).*

In contrast to the Haiti evaluation reports, the Dominican evaluation made no attempt to evaluate the extent to which the observed increase in democracy-building behavior increased the overall development of civil-society at the sub-state level. At the same time, the evaluation did not provide any evidence that would negate the likelihood that this is an operating assumption of USAID's civil society assistance programs. Given its sound deductive logic, this study concludes that this hypothesis is indeed an operating assumption of USAID – they hope that the increased democracy building-behavior that they believe results from their individual and organization-level assistance is likely to yield compounded positive effects on the civil society sector as a whole.

The fact that this is an operating assumption is indirectly supported by the high level of assistance USAID devoted to PC's civil society-network program. USAID was not just concerned with providing one-off assistance to individual civil society groups, but was very much focused on establishing a network of civil society organizations. It was evident that

USAID hoped that the establishment of such a network would yield power in numbers, to ultimately increase the influence of civil society as a whole in Dominican politics. The evaluation lauded the great extent to which the sheer size of PC's network succeeded in pressuring the government to conduct free and fair elections. Although the evaluation did not measure the growth of civil society as a whole in the country or empirically establish causality, it did repeatedly contend that participation in civil society organizations as a result of USAID aid efforts. In support of this contention, it cited 2001 survey data that indicated a slight increase in USAID-trainee participation in civil society groups when compared to the 1997 Dominican population as a whole. Although, such a comparison yields faulty causal conclusions, it does indicate that USAID was interested in determining the aggregate affects of its assistance.

In conclusion, this case study of USAID's civil society program in the Dominican Republic only partially confirms that the theory of democracy assistance proposed herein is USAID's operating theory. The contracted evaluation report indirectly affirmed that USAID assumed that the Dominican Republic needed its assistance to consolidate its democracy. The evaluation identified and directly sought to test the operating assumption that USAID assistance increases individual capabilities for democracy building behavior, but also sought to provide substantial evidence in support of increased organization-level capabilities.

The evaluation indirectly affirmed that USAID operated under the assumption that aid recipients would be willing to engage in pro-democracy behavior and actually found evidence in support of this assumption through the extensive mobilization of nearly ten thousand of PC's election observation trainees. However, the evaluation also indicated that USAID's rule of law

program in the country focused more on increasing the willingness of elected officials to change their rule of law policies and to select the judicial nominees favored by USAID's favored civil society organizations. Thus, the operating theory needs to incorporate the fact that USAID seeks to directly influence elected officials' willingness to engage in democracy-building behavior (as USAID perceives it) in addition to directly increase aid recipient capabilities. The attempt to influence willingness is not indirect, as was assumed by the proposed operating theory.

Finally, USAID did operate in the Dominican Republic under the assumption that its assistance to individuals and organizations will have compounded effects on civil society as a whole on the sub-state level. The evaluation attempted to provide evidence of this operating assumption, although its attempt suffered from sample selection flaws that rendered its conclusions unsubstantiated.

As was the case with USAID's contracted Haiti evaluation reports, the Dominican evaluation attempted to examine program effectiveness at least in part with objective indicators operationalized through surveys and interviews of program participants and the county's population as a whole. It viewed the program with a critical eye, especially in regards to the likelihood of participant organization sustainability given limited domestic funding.

However, the evaluation suffered from methodological flaws. In particular it did not correct its survey samples for self-selection into USAID programs, it did not account for change over time within the same sample group, it did not have any baseline data to compare its results to, and its examination of change in individual behavior and values as well as its examination of organization-level capacity increases did not account for important factors exogenous to USAID assistance. As a result, the correlation that the evaluation found between the provision of

assistance on one hand and increased capacity and democracy-building behavior on the other is just that – a correlation. No sound attempt was made to establish causation.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

This study began with an examination of the extent to which democratic development is advancing worldwide. It found that the *third wave* of democracy continues to transform the world into one of ever more democratic regimes, despite contemporary misconceptions that semi- (or illiberal) democracy is becoming most prevalent. Although no single form of democracy is universal, indigenous forms of democracy are progressing toward consolidation on every continent. They may be more hierarchical, corporatist, or communitarian than Westerners would expect, but they are democratic nonetheless. The development of democracy also may take longer than is tolerable by America's impatient political culture. However, it appears that the *partly free* gray zone is often a prolonged period of transition rather than the stopping point that many fear.

Next, the organization and practices of the American democracy assistance community were explained. The origins and evolution of the democracy assistance bureaucracy were also explored, including its continually increasing operating budget. Common notions of democracy promotion as only democratization by force were dispelled. Instead, it was revealed what it is that the practitioners who provide democracy assistance actually do: training, mentoring, counseling, and sometimes lobbying. Often, in-kind funding is provided to organizations and government agencies abroad to help them improve their technical capability (such as in the form

of computers, databases to track legislation, or survey results to inform candidates of their voters' priorities, etc.). Direct funding to advocacy organizations is on the decline, except when funding is used for training. In other words, increasingly, the U.S. democracy community emphasis is on what they call, "training the trainers."

A thorough literature review was then conducted to determine if it supported the democracy community's assumption that democratic development has a positive causal relationship with democratic development in recipient countries. Although democracy is on the advance worldwide, the literature has provided little evidence to support the notion that democracy assistance has contributed to this advance. It was found instead that most case studies focused on the negative effects of assistance and deemed it, "meddling." The extant quantitative studies focused primarily on democratization by force, with one notable exception. That exception, by Finkel, et. al., found a positive correlation between USAID democracy assistance funding and state level democracy indicators. They controlled for many state level independent variables such as economic development and conflict. However, they did not provide a theory to explain the presumed causal relationship. In essence, what they found was correlation without causation, despite their great efforts to control for exogenous factors.

Because there was no theory of democracy assistance provided by the political science literature, the public administration evaluation literature and the evaluation practices of democracy assistance practitioners were examined. The hope was that a theory of democracy assistance could be found across disciplines, or at a minimum, that administrative efforts to evaluate assistance results would inform a better way to test the link between democracy assistance and democratic development.

However, it was revealed that despite great efforts and much money invested in the development of evaluation requirements to increase transparency and accountability, the link between assistance and development remains an assumption. This study expected from the outset that assistance program evaluations would be inherently biased for political reasons. However, notions of this were disproved to some extent, on the basis that much attention has been devoted to the development of “objective” indicators of impact. Unfortunately, the indicators have lead to methodologically flawed evaluations that leave much room for subjective reporting. In addition, the sheer burden of the evaluation process that has recently been rolled out to USAID missions (the *F-Process*) in particular has yielded inconsistency in reporting and superficiality in analysis. Because of this there is a limited feedback loop between the assistance implementer reports and programmatic decision-making, much less policymaking on a grand scale. The NED’s process is less regimented but more susceptible to bias and inconsistency in reporting.

That said, the analysis of the evaluation literature and the practitioner evaluation processes shed light on the heretofore elusive component of the democracy assistance theory: individuals. Donor dollars are spent for the most part on increasing individual capacity to engage in collective democracy-building behavior. Yet results are continually measured on the state-level. No consideration is given to the process that leads individual level inputs to yield state-level change. The current evaluation requirements lead to reporting on immediate individual level outputs, as indicated by numbers of people trained, for example. But, little consideration is given to what those individuals do after they have been trained. The evaluation requirements also lead to reporting on agency or branch-level immediate outputs such as numbers of laws passed to protect human rights or fight corruption. Little consideration is given

to the way assistance fostered the passage of those laws or the long term impact that those specific laws have – often such laws are not enforced. In sum, even these seemingly objective attempts at evaluation in the name of accountability miss critical pieces of the causal chain.

It must be noted, however, that despite these flaws, democracy assistance practitioners for the most part are very well aware of the fact that democracy cannot be “exported.” They are aware that conditions have to be ripe for assistance recipients to capitalize on their training or funding to further democratic development in their home states. Some within the community characterize this as a process in which assistance seeks to hasten a dynamic that exists before aid arrives. They recognize that the place where they can have the most impact is on increasing the capacity of reform-minded individuals to effect change. They are realistic about the many factors that come into play that limit the likelihood of success, yet they remain believers in the process.

Consideration of Most and Starr’s pre-theoretical framework of opportunity and willingness makes clear what specifically democracy assistance providers believe they can achieve. This study makes an original contribution to the literature by adapting Most and Starr’s international relations pre-theoretical framework and applying it to an examination of the assumed causal relationship between democracy assistance and democratic development. In so doing, this study is the first to apply the opportunity and willingness framework to an examination of the process of democratic development. This study is also the first to develop a theory of democracy assistance that explains how assistance is expected to yield democratic development. Whereas previous theories specified how democracies develop, none specified how assistance may contribute to such development.

As Most and Starr explain in their examination of why states fight each other, states must both be willing and have the opportunity to fight, if they are to go to war. But, military capabilities are only one contributing factor to opportunity. International and domestic structural factors as well as individual-level environmental factors also affect opportunity and, hence, decisions to fight.

The democracy assistance theory that is proposed here likewise holds, as stated in Chapter 6, that democratic development is the result of two necessary factors: opportunity and willingness to act. Democracy assistance providers seek to improve but one necessary element that determines state-level opportunity to develop elements of democracy -- individual and ultimately organizational democracy-building capabilities.

Assistance providers hope that this will indirectly increase individuals' willingness to act on their own or within organizations and government. Providers are well aware of the fact that increased capabilities are but one critical piece of opportunity to effect change. They know that they can have only indirect impact on individual assistance recipients' personal environments. They also know that they can have only indirect impact on a recipient state's domestic and international political and economic environments. Hence, the part of opportunity to effect change that they seek to directly impact is individual capabilities (see Figure 5.6 for an illustration of the causal mechanisms of democracy assistance). This has just never been articulated in the political science literature or in published reports on assistance activities. It was observed, however through the course of this study during one year of participant observation in Washington -- as was detailed in the Preface and in Chapter 6 -- and was confirmed to a great extent through the two case studies conducted as part of this project.

USAID's civil society assistance programs in the Dominican Republic and Haiti in the 1990s and 2000s were examined in an effort to test: first, the extent to which this proposed individual level theory of democracy assistance matched the operating theory of practitioners on the ground; second, the hypothesis that evaluation reports are biased; and third, the extent to which evaluators find democracy assistance to achieve the intended results.

The Dominican Republic was selected as a most likely case for several reasons. A decade of program continuity provided the optimal environment for consistency and quality of evaluation data collection and reporting. USAID's reputation of success in the Dominican Republic eliminated the need for biased reporting and the country's trajectory of democratic development provided the optimal opportunity for success – if assistance can succeed anywhere, it is likely to succeed in the Dominican Republic.

Haiti was selected as a least likely case for several reasons as well. Decades of democracy assistance provided decades of evaluations to examine. Political instability led to inconsistent programming over time and was likely to result in inconsistent data collection and evaluation reporting. Accusations of American meddling in Haiti leading to negative unintended consequences, as well as repeated state failure, made the country a least likely case for assistance success and a most likely case for evaluation reporting bias.

The case study results affirmed that the individual level democracy assistance theory is indeed the operating theory of assistance providers. Almost all assistance programs provided in the most adverse and supportive conditions over the course of ten-plus years in both cases were aimed at increasing individual level – and by extension, organization level – capacity to engage in democracy building behavior.

However, in both cases, assistance providers on occasion lobbied local and national public officials to: in the case of Haiti, cooperate with citizens in community-building projects; and in the case of the Dominican Republic, to pass laws that would establish an official public defenders' office and constrain corruption. Lobbying cannot be deemed an individual-level capacity-building activity. It is, in contrast, an activity aimed at directly influencing a person's willingness to effect change. Looking back at my past field research in the Dominican Republic, this should have been anticipated when the theory was developed. However, the extent to which the evaluations reported on this type of activity paled in comparison to the preponderance of focus on individual-level capacity building in the form of USAID-sponsored training seminars and citizen forums, or funding to NGOs such as *Participación Ciudadana* to train election observers. Because of this great disparity in emphasis, a revision of the theory is not warranted. The cases demonstrate that assistance is directed almost entirely at individual-level capacity building under the assumption that individual recipients will proceed to engage in democracy-building behavior over time.

Despite this finding, the evaluation reports that were examined in both cases failed to account for post-training individual-level behavior. In the case of Haiti, attempts were made to report on sub-state level civil society growth over time and community development successes were touted. The evaluations concluded that the assistance made a positive impact on civil society in Haiti. However, no effort was made to determine if individual assistance recipients proceeded with increased civic engagement over time. It was assumed that individuals who had positive experiences in contributing to successful community development projects and civic forums would continue to be civically engaged, and increasingly so post-assistance. It was

assumed that the individuals who received assistance went on to strengthen civil society and that the observed growth in the civil society sector was a result of assistance.

As expected, program inconsistency in Haiti due to extreme political instability yielded evaluation inconsistency and proved especially detrimental to data collection. Programs were repeatedly revamped to adapt to an ever changing political environment and consequently the data that was collected for evaluation purposes at the end of each program did not allow for comparison across programs. Hence, there was no way to track change over time, even over the short term. Although it appeared that the evaluators made multiple sincere attempts to construct evaluation designs in a manner that would allow for subjective reporting, their results were at times biased in favor of assistance success without sufficient or valid indicators of such success. That said, the Haiti evaluations did repeatedly report on programmatic shortcomings and suggest areas for improvement. They were, therefore, more critical than was hypothesized.

In the case of the Dominican Republic, programmatic continuity created the optimal context for thorough and consistent evaluation. Surprisingly, a ten year evaluation report made an admirable attempt to compare individual level survey data before and after the provision of assistance. Although the correct level was examined and the pre- and post-test was the right approach for an intervention analysis, the study was methodologically flawed. The pre-test sample was taken from the total population and the post-test sample only included assistance recipients. Therefore, the evaluation compared differences in national values, opinions, and levels of civic engagement to that of individuals who most likely self-selected themselves as assistance recipients. Such recipients are likely to be prone to higher levels of civic engagement than the national population, regardless of assistance. Therefore the pre- and post-test comparisons failed to provide evidence in support of a positive causal relationship between

assistance and increased democracy-building behavior and attitudes, despite reporting that it did find such evidence.

Additionally, the evaluation reports of USAID's eleven year civil society assistance program in the Dominican Republic sought to examine change in the capacities nongovernmental organizations following receipt of assistance. To do so, the evaluators conducted surveys of individuals within the recipient organizations to determine after the fact if aid had a positive impact. However, the surveys made no distinction between change in internal organizational behavior between individuals within the organization who did or did not participate in the training programs. Hence, the evaluations did not account for organizational change that was attributable to factors exogenous to assistance, such as new hires or change in administrative structure that had nothing to do with USAID training.

That said, the impact that USAID had on the training of thousands of domestic election observers and election board members through the funding it provided to *Participación Ciudadana (PC)* was tremendous. PC's activities undeniably had a direct and at least medium term impact on the extent to which Dominican elections are free and fair. PC increased the capacity of thousands of individuals to engage in democracy-building behavior on a national-scale over repeated elections in the form of election observation and trainees applying pressure to candidates to adhere to democratic standards.

Despite this great success, the USAID-sponsored evaluation itself raised concerns that the organizations that were funded in the Dominican Republic for the decade-long program would not be able to sustain their activities without USAID funding. In other words, the program had great impact but the domestic organizations remain completely dependent on assistance. The question that the evaluation did not address is if the thousands of individuals that the

organizations trained with USAID funding would continue on to engage in collective democracy-building behavior even without the assistance of the NGOs. The individuals would perhaps not be as organized, but the culture of civic engagement surrounding elections has likely changed for good.

Notably, the Dominican evaluation report was surprisingly critical of the assistance program to the extent that it warned against the assistance-dependency that the program fostered. Again, this was not anticipated by my study's hypothesis that the reports would be biased in favor of assistance program success. They reported on both positive and negative results, although the positive results were for the most part based on evidence obtained through methodologically flawed studies in terms of sample bias. This may or may not have been intended. I expect that it was a sincere attempt at sound evaluation, but one that fell short.

When the results of this study are considered on the whole, there are several important policy implications and related recommendations for future research. In terms of policy implications, funding needs to be provided to in-country assistance programs to improve their evaluation practices. In particular, assistance programs need to invest in pre-tests on the individual level. USAID and the NED have both been allocating greater resources to program evaluation and pre-/post-tests in particular. However these expenditures are a waste if data is not collected on the individual level before and after assistance, over many points in and extended periods of time. A representative sample of individual level behavior needs to be tracked over the long term to determine if indeed the operating theory of the democracy assistance community is correct.

Objectors are sure to suggest that individuals who receive training in emerging democracies will not want to be tracked by evaluators for fear of political recriminations at home

from those opposed to democratic development. However, there are many countries, such as the Dominican Republic, that continue to receive assistance and which are open enough that a large enough sample of individual recipients are not likely to fear backlash from reports of their pro-democracy reform behavior. Such countries would fall under USAID's "Sustaining Partnership" category of recipient states.

Even if only representative samples of data were collected within "Sustaining Partnership" states, it would allow for much better causal analysis than has ever been conducted. After all, these countries are the most likely cases for success. If we are likely to see successful assistance programs anywhere, we are likely to see them there. If we do not see success there, of all places, then the democracy assistance theory would need to be revised and current assistance practices would need to be reformed. It is through such modified evaluation practices that assistance providers could determine not only large scale effectiveness but also the effectiveness of specific assistance activities. Through such evaluation modifications, true learning could occur within the democracy assistance community.

Some may contend that this study has only affirmed the fit of the proposed democracy assistance theory to real world practices within the civil society sector. However, the theory is very likely to apply across sectors if further research was conducted. This is evident given consideration of each of the sectors that USAID targets, for example, with its democracy assistance programs. Assistance targeted at improving "Rule of Law and Human Rights," "Good Governance," and "Political Competition and Consensus-Building" is for the most part directed at individuals. Legislators, for example are trained in American notions of constitution-writing or judicial independence. Public officials are counseled on best practices for transparency or the types of laws that are needed to be passed to constrain corruption. Political party leaders are

trained to increase democratic practices within the party organizations or to consider public opinion surveys to develop policy platforms that reflect constituent demands. Reform-minded government officials in proportional systems participate in seminars that teach coalition-building strategies and skills.

In sum, most democracy assistance donor dollars, across sectors, are spent on training and counseling at the individual level. It remains to be determined if democracy assistance is likely to increase democratic development in recipient states. But if we want to find out, then we have to examine the extent to which individuals who specifically receive assistance change their behavior, collectively, over time. Only then can we possibly link the bulk of democracy assistance, which is provided to individuals, to state-level democratic development over time. If we are to determine democracy assistance effectiveness, we must bring the *demos* root of democracy to the forefront of our analyses.

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