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Obecně platí, že jakýkoli konstruktivní komentář je užitečný.
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Transactional Activism as a Result of Democracy Assistance to East-Central Europe: The Case of the Czech Republic

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Introduction

The political mobilizations that marked the end of communist regimes in many East European countries raised high expectations, especially among Western observers, regarding the future of democratic citizenship in the region. When reading reflections on East European ‘revolutions’, one cannot but conclude that there was a wide belief in the possibility of reinvigorated active political participation in post-communist countries. However, after a short period of enthusiasm it became clear that these hopes would not materialize in the foreseeable future. East Europeans simply refused to fulfill the radical democratic hopes of some academic enthusiasts. The tone in the literature changed accordingly. There was a perceptible shift from the early emphatic enthusiasm about East European citizens, to a gloomy picture of passive, disinterested and cynical East European subjects. Many reasons for this perceived failure on the part of East Europeans were enumerated. Communist legacies, post-communist disappointment, and the inappropriate strategies of West European democracy promoters stand out among them.

This paper takes issue especially with the latter argument. It claims that international influence, which did indeed leave a deep imprint on East European civil societies, did not curb opportunities for political activism in the region, but helped create a particular activist form that is overlooked, if one looks only on the participatory side of activism. Although it was persuasively demonstrated that on average East Europeans participate less than their counterparts in the established democracies, it does not necessarily follow that civil societies in post-communist countries are weak. The paper supports its claims with the help of evidence taken from several sectors of political activism in the Czech Republic.

The first section of the paper outlines the debate on political activism in East-Central Europe (ECE). Drawing on the paper recently published by T. Petrova and S. Tarrow in this journal, it differentiates between two forms of political activism: participatory and transactional. The second section asks what accounts for the development of transactional activism in ECE. In order to find the answer, the section focuses on the resources available to social movement organizations (SMOs) in ECE in general, and in the Czech Republic in particular. It shows that advocacy SMOs relied in terms of their funding on predominantly foreign sources. The third section presents the currently prevailing assessment of foreign civil-society-building programs, in order to challenge some of its presuppositions in the fourth section. Hence, the fourth section debates the consequences of foreign funding for political activists and political contention in the Czech Republic, and strives to confront the currently dominant view that underscores its negative sides. The paper concludes by putting the study of political activism into the context of a broader debate on the quality of democracy.

Political Activism in Eastern Europe

There are two bodies of literature on the state of organized political activism in ECE (for a review see Petrova & Tarrow, 2007). The first body includes studies focused on individual participation. These studies consistently show low levels of organizational

membership in the ECE countries. For example, on the basis of the 1995-97 World Values Study, Marc Howard (2003) documents that the average number of memberships in voluntary organizations per person in the group of post-communist countries is significantly lower than in the older democracies and post-authoritarian countries.¹ While the older democracies mean is 2.39, and post-authoritarian regimes score 1.89, the post-communist countries mean lags significantly behind with just 0.91. In addition, when Howard makes the comparison among the three groups of countries according to different organizational types, the results point in the same direction. The only exception is labor unions. Particularly low levels of membership are displayed by politically-oriented organizations, such as political parties and environmental groups, and church, educational, cultural, and artistic organizations.

Studies that focus on individual participation have regarded the low level of organizational membership in Eastern Europe as an indicator of weak civil societies in the region. However, the second body of literature on political activism in ECE challenges this account by showing the well-developed structure of advocacy organizations in that same group of countries. Although these studies do not dispute the facts documented by the individual-level scholars, they doubt that they provide a full picture of political activism in ECE. These studies document an impressive growth in the numbers of various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across the region. This shows that although there was not much mobilization on the individual level, there was indeed a great deal of organizational development in the sphere of political activism after 1989. The data used by the individual-level scholars demonstrate the limited ability of these organizations to mobilize; however, they do not say anything about other aspects of activism.

The available evidence seem to suggest that some of these organizations have grown into relatively effective advocacy groups that have the capacity to influence the decision-making process on the national, subnational, and in some cases even transnational levels (Toepler & Salamon, 2003; Císař, 2004; Petrova & Tarrow, 2007). Drawing on USAID studies, Petrova and Tarrow (2007) provide the most comprehensive assessment thus far of the advocacy capacity of East European NGOs. The USAID Sustainability Index measures seven dimensions of the NGO sector: legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, NGO infrastructure and public image. In general, the advocacy dimension that interests us here captures “NGOs’ record in influencing public policy.” It analyses “the prevalence of advocacy in different sectors, at different levels of government, as well as with the private sector”, and considers “the extent to which coalitions of NGOs have been formed around issues ..., as well as whether NGOs monitor party platforms and government performance.” (USAID, 2005)

The USAID data seems to substantiate the claim that East European NGOs have developed a considerable advocacy capacity. According to Petrova and Tarrow, although these organizations lack the ability to mobilize individuals, i.e. to engage them in “participatory activism”, they nevertheless fare much better in terms of “transactional activism”. Transactional activism means “the ties – enduring and temporary – among organized nonstate actors and between them and political parties, power holders, and other institutions.” (Petrova & Tarrow, 2007, p. 79) In other words, the fact that East European organizations display low levels of organizational membership does not

necessarily indicate the lack of any activism at all. On the contrary, by not limiting the notion of activism to its participatory dimension one can “see a richer picture of transactions consisting of coalition formation around single issues, network formation, and negotiation with elites on the part of civic groups in Central and Eastern Europe...” (p. 80)

Sources of Political Activism

The available explanations of political activism in ECE mostly focus on the reasons for individual nonparticipation. Thus, according to Howard (2002; 2003), the legacy of mistrust in organized participation under the communist regimes, the persistence of friendship networks, and disappointment with post-communist developments lie behind the unwillingness of East European citizens to take part in voluntary organizations. However, as demonstrated in the previous section, this does not tell the whole story. Although the lack of participatory activism may be well explained by these factors, transactional activism still remains to be accounted for. Hence, the main question of this paper is: What explains the peculiar pattern of political activism in ECE? In other words, what made it possible for transactional activism to develop in ECE?

In order to identify the explanatory variable, I look at the resources available to advocacy organizations to sustain themselves. As the adherents of the resource mobilization paradigm pointed out long ago, political activism is based on the availability of resources, such as money, time, leadership skills, and expert knowledge (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Jenkins, 1983). As the presented evidence shows, East European advocacy organizations have been unable to rely on resources provided by their membership base. There have been few members to provide organizations with their time and financial contributions. Thus, the necessary resources have had to come through different channels.

In general, the dominant source of funding for NGOs in ECE in the 1990s was earned income, fees, and charges. These sources of funding comprised 46 percent of NGO revenues in 1995/96 (Toepler & Salamon, 2003, p. 372). However, as Toepler and Salamon point out, this number reflects the prevalence of fee-dependent cultural and recreation organizations, professional associations and trade unions in the non-governmental sector in ECE (for the composition of the sector, see Table 1). As a result, the aggregate number does not tell us much about the situation of advocacy organizations.

[Table 1 about here]

Statistics show that different types of organizations vary greatly in terms of their revenues. I will support this claim below with the data on the public funding of different types of organizations in the Czech Republic. There is, however, no systematic evidence available on the volume of earned income, fees, and charges according to the organizational type. Taking into account what was said in the previous section, this category should not play any significant role in the budgets of advocacy organizations. Although I am unable to support this hypothesis by systematic evidence, I can nevertheless provide some data taken from the Czech Republic’s environmental sector. The table below shows the weight of earned income and of all types of contributions by individuals (not necessarily membership dues) in the budgets of five advocacy organizations that played a visible role in the environmental campaigns of the 1990s, and

that are regarded in the literature as the most important advocacy organizations in the Czech green movement (Fagin, 2004; Davis, 2004).

[Table 2 about here]

As Greenpeace Czech Republic presents an important exception among advocacy organizations in the Czech Republic, I will not consider it for the time being, and will come back to it later in the paper. Unlike other organizations, it actually managed to mobilize a sufficient number of individual contributors by 2002. Here, I will focus on the remaining four SMOs. Although there are important differences among them, the table demonstrates that even the most successful of them – the Rainbow Movement – was still in 1998 able to generate only 16.6 percent of its revenues by its own means.² Although it is not possible to get hold of the organizations' annual reports from the early 1990s (generally, there were no reports published at that time), I can reasonably suppose that the situation prior to 1998 in terms of the organizations' ability to sustain themselves independently of external sources was even worse than in the period captured in the table. Indeed, this inference is supported by all the available studies (Fagin & Jehlička, 1998; Fagin, 2000; Fagin & Jehlička, 2003; Fagin, 2004; 2005; Davis, 2004; Jehlička, Sarre & Podoba, 2005). Given the lack of exact data, additional indirect evidence on the limited capacity of advocacy organizations to mobilize resources from indigenous sources is provided by public opinion polls that demonstrate on the one hand the relatively high readiness of the Czech population to donate money to voluntary organizations, while on the other hand showing that most of that money is devoted to charity and service-oriented organizations (STEM & NROS 2004).

The level of public sector funding for NGOs is over the ECE average in the Czech Republic. While the average for ECE countries was 33 percent in 1995/96, in the Czech Republic public sector funding formed 39 percent of organizations' budgets at that time (Toepler & Salamon, 2003). Again, as illustrated by Tables 3 and 4 below, their distribution among different organizational types was very uneven. The bulk of public funding was channeled to the areas of social services and sport activities. Advocacy organizations received almost no public funding. In 1999 environmental organizations obtained just 3 percent of all public funding, organizations fighting for the rights of ethnic minorities 1 percent, and consumer rights organizations received no subsidies at all. Also in 2003 advocacy organizations, represented in Table 4 by environmentalists and gender equality groups, received almost no subsidies from public sector sources.

[Table 3 about here]

[Table 4 about here]

These findings are widely supported by research on the non-state sector in the Czech Republic. On the basis of the data from the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, P. Frič shows that although the public sector funding of the non-governmental sector in the Czech Republic was on the rise in the 1990s, advocacy organizations newly established after 1989 received almost no benefit from it. Public sector funding displayed a highly path-dependent pattern, as service-oriented organizations that already existed before the collapse of the regime were the ones to benefit the most from it. According to Frič (1999, p. 98), this method of funding worked

as “a selection mechanism that privileged one type of organizations, and was to a different extent harmful to others. Most harmed were organizations advocating human rights”. The main reason for this lack of support in the 1990s was the hostility of that time’s political elite towards social movements and advocacy associations. As Table 4 demonstrates, this attitude established a pattern that survived well after its main initiators lost their positions.

As the available evidence shows, advocacy organizations in the Czech Republic were able to rely neither on earned income, nor on public sector subsidies. The bulk of their activities have been financed through various foundations, mostly foreign, and grant programs. In order to illustrate this point, Table 5 gives an overview of grant funding for the five Czech environmental organizations I mentioned earlier. With the notable exception of Greenpeace Czech Republic, the table shows that the majority of their budgets were financed by various foundations’ grants (grants provided by state institutions are excluded from the table).

[Table 5 about here]

From the beginning of the 1990s, the organizations of the Czech environmental movement depended for their funding mostly on external donors. Funding sources included, among several others, the Swedish environmental organization Acid Rain, agencies such as United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Dutch Embassy, the German Marshall Fund, the British Know How Fund, and at a later stage funding coming from the EU through the Regional Environmental Center and the Phare Program (Fagan, 2004). In the 1990s these sources constituted the most important source of income for Czech environmental advocacy organizations. Moreover, although some of the more established groups have recently employed active strategies to mobilize individual supporters, with the exception of Greenpeace Czech Republic grant funding provided by various foundations continues to be their single most important source of money.

‘Civil Society’ Building

International aid programs aimed at democracy promotion and building civil society in particular have flourished since the beginning of the 1990s both in the US and Western Europe.³ As ‘vibrant civil society’ began to be widely regarded as an important precondition for political stability and democratic accountability, various programs aimed at promoting ‘civic virtues’ were designed and executed by development agencies, public and private foundations, and several other institutions in ECE (Wedel, 1998; Carothers, 1999; Mendelson & Glenn, 2002; Henderson, 2003; Scott & Steele, 2005). In the beginning of the 1990s, US programs and programs by individual European governments plus US private foundations provided most of the funding. Later on, as the ECE countries embarked on the way to the EU, many of these agencies declared them to be relatively stable regimes, scaled down their programs, and moved eastwards. At that point, grants provided by the EU became the most important source of funding for advocacy organizations throughout the region.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the concept of civil society became fashionable among democracy-promoting agencies around the world. In an idealized neo-Tocquevillian understanding of civil society promoters, civil society started to be

understood as an associational arena formed by voluntary associations, independent from both state and economy. Civic associations were expected to provide citizens with a means of political participation and to put a check on decision-making processes taking place within the formal structure of state institutions. It was believed that by supporting these relatively independent agencies, political reforms in transition countries would be served better than if money were provided directly to agents within the state bureaucratic structure, who lacked the flexibility and even the willingness to embark on the path of reform (Carothers, 1999).

Civil society is, however, quite a fluid concept. In order to make it operative, it had to be expressed in terms that would be understandable to potential funders. As the available research on democracy promotion suggests, since the beginning of the 1990s support for civil society has been conflated with the support for advocacy NGOs (Henderson 2002; 2003; Aksartova, 2006). Thus, when analyzing the USAID programs aimed at civil society building in Eastern Europe, Thomas Carothers (1999) shows that they focused predominantly on NGOs

dedicated to advocacy for what aid providers consider[ed] to be sociopolitical issues touching public interest – including election monitoring, civic education, parliamentary transparency, human rights, anticorruption, the environment, women’s rights, and indigenous people’s rights... Aid officials have in fact begun to call the advocacy NGOs they supported under civil society programs “civil society organizations,” misleadingly implying that these few, usually rather new and specialized organizations represent the core or even the bulk of civil society in the countries in question. (p. 210)

By providing funding only to this particular organizational type, promoters actually enforced it across the region of ECE, causing a tremendous increase in numbers of NGOs in all transition societies (Carothers, 1999; McMahon, 2001; Henderson, 2002; 2003; Narozhna, 2004). As there were almost no other potential sources of funding available, the imperative of organizational survival dictated adapting to fit the agenda and demands of foreign donors. By now, this seems to be a well-established story of democracy promotion in post-communist societies.

According to critical assessments of civil society programs, in the beginning of the 1990s there was a widely held belief among Western political and intellectual elite that the fall of communism had equaled a total institutional collapse (Stark & Bruszt, 1998). According to this view, the collapse of communist regimes brought an ‘institutional vacuum’ that called for programs that would create new institutions from scratch. In the area of civil society building this attitude allowed for disregarding the already existing organizations, and according to critics, ultimately resulted in the complete disregard of the indigenously developed interests and collective identities (Phillips, 1999).

According to this criticism story, by providing institutional support Western donors not only directly influenced agendas pursued by East European ‘independent’ organizations, but also redirected their activities from domestic mobilization of their constituencies to transnational grant-seeking (Narozhna, 2004). Instead of empowering and making these organizations able to become means of participation, the programs created dependency among them, and made them caught in an endless vicious circle of grant applications. Thus, the foreign-funding dependent East European NGOs have

become ‘ghettoized’ in the sense that “they are closer to their transnational partners than the constituents they are meant to represent or the governments they claim to be influencing” (Henderson, 2003, p. 13; see also Mendelson & Glenn, 2002). According to the harshest critics, these programs actually prevented East Europeans from creating their indigenous social movements; instead, they imposed on them a particular organizational pattern that was inimical to the idea of popular movements. As a result, like the centralized state before the collapse of communism, incompetent Western donors after its end suppressed popular participation in ECE (McMahon, 2001).

Due to the Western funding, East European civil societies were populated by relatively formalized and professionalized advocacy organizations. In order to become eligible for funding, organizations had to adapt to the organizational model that was recognized by donors as the legitimate manifestation of civic associations – an advocacy NGO. According to the critics, the variability of potential civil society organizations was thus reduced to the narrow conception of professionalized advocacy organizations unable to engage citizens in genuine contestation and political contention. Instead of social movements, public interest groups mushroomed in the region. In terms of their action repertoire, these organizations preferred cooperation with political authorities to more contentious forms of claims making. Hence, popular mobilizations across the region that accompanied the regime collapse gave way to a more institutionalized and moderated form of ‘interest politics’. From this point of view, the perceived promise of East European ‘revolutions’ to reinvigorate citizen participation has never materialized in practice. After the regime collapsed, people turned their backs on politics, which started to be occupied by professional political elites in both the state and civil society. The trend that had been set in motion already in the beginning of the 1990s was even reinforced after most of the original donors scaled down their programs in the second half of the 1990s. At this point, the EU became the dominant source of foreign funding. The EU programs strengthened the pressure towards institutionalization and professionalization even more. The question I want to address in the remainder of the paper is: were really the consequences of external funding as crippling as the above reviewed arguments seem to suggest?

Consequences of External Funding

The available research on the impact of foundation funding seems to suggest that by providing funds, philanthropic institutions actually contribute to the co-optation of social movements by political elites. This results in a professionalization of the activities of social movements that “siphons movement activists from grassroots organizing, thereby diverting them from their original goals and demobilizing the movements” (Jenkins, 1998, p. 212). Hence, according to this thesis, foundations, on some accounts consciously, help transform militant movements into more moderate and less contentious actors. Instead of the co-optation thesis, C. Jenkins comes up with an alternative *channeling* thesis. He argues, first, that “foundation goals are complex”, thus, it is not possible to see foundations only as tools of social control; second, that “the main impact of movement philanthropy has been professionalization”; and third, that “professionalization has frequently created greater mobilization and social movement success.” (p. 212)

In his research on US social movements Jenkins shows that it was indeed the case: foundation funding did not necessarily lead to co-optation and goal displacement on the part of social movements; rather, it contributed to the professionalization of some components of the movements, and “allowed them to consolidate their gains and protect themselves against attack.” (p. 215) According to Jenkins, the US social movements’ activities were not co-opted, but channeled towards professionalization that did not necessarily diminish the importance of indigenous components of the movements. Except for the consumer protection movement, in all other sectors studied by Jenkins indigenous groups made up most of their action between 1953 and 1980. Therefore, despite the growing professionalization of the movements, Jenkins concludes that there was no displacement of indigenous activity by professional organizations in the US.

The situation was different in ECE. While in the US foundations reacted to the mobilizations of the 1960s, and channeled already existing social movements; there were no consolidated social movements in ECE after the fall of communism. Although a wave of episodic mobilization and contention marked the end of the communist regimes across the region (Rudbeck & Sigudsson, 1999; Glenn, 2003), this mobilization did not directly give birth to a group of social movements that would represent a set of recognizable claims. In Czechoslovakia, the movement that emerged out of the anti-communist mobilization soon dissolved into a number of political parties and other groups. In addition, some of the organizations that allegedly represented interests of various segments of society had already existed under the communist regime; however, these organizations were controlled by the regime and served as tools of social control over the society. All this meant that in Czechoslovakia various social movement sectors began to form exactly at the time when foreign funding arrived to build a ‘vibrant’ civil society.

As I showed in the previous sections, the emerging advocacy organizations have relied almost fully on foreign funding from the very beginning of the 1990s. Research on various sectors of social movement organizations (SMOs) in the Czech Republic contends that these organizations became almost fully dependent on foreign funding, and as a result did not have any motivation to mobilize individual supporters within the country. There were no indigenous social movement organizations within the country; thus, there was no channeling of their mobilization similar to that observed by Jenkins in the US. It seems as though from the very beginning the emerging social movement organizations have been co-opted by the political system, moderated in their demands, and relatively institutionalized in terms of their organizational structure. Instead of potentially disruptive social movements, structural conditions after the fall of the old regime gave birth to professional NGO activists, who were trained more in grant applications and lobbying than in mobilizing. In the remainder of the paper I will first illustrate these claims by looking more closely at the results of the available research on organizations in the environmental and women rights’ sectors. Second, I will question the one-sidedly negative account of the consequences of foreign funding by challenging the assumption found in these accounts that an alternative – indigenously based – funding would bring actors capable of taking a more contentious stance towards political authorities.

To start with, I will turn to Czech environmental organizations. The first post-communist government established a “State Fund for the Environment” that was to collect the money from polluters’ fines and licenses. However, this money was not made

available to advocacy-oriented SMOs, but was channeled towards “apolitical conservation projects pursued by the older EMOs” (Fagan, 2004, p. 91). The newly-established organizations had to apply for support from various funding agencies, and as Fagan shows, in some cases even from multinationals. The result was, according to Fagan, a de-radicalization of the movement. Instead of presenting an alternative to the mainstream liberal market-based view of environmental protection, it embraced the liberal view and strove to become a recognized voice in the public debate. These organizations “were keen to demonstrate their professionalism as well as their proximity to the policy process and the media.” (p. 99) And there was a price to be paid for their increasing influence. They had to abandon protest in favor of policy making and lobbying that in turn demanded increasing professionalization on their part. In addition, they lost the ability to independently decide on their agenda. In order to become eligible for funding, organizations’ goals had to fit the donors’ preferences (Fagan, 2004; 2005; Hicks, 2004).

As the previous sections showed, in the beginning of the 1990s, mostly US-based foundations and sources from individual West European states supported this sector of social movements. By the late 1990s, when the country was already firmly on its way to the EU, these donors started to withdraw. The pre-accession EU funding, the money from the UNDP, and the continuing Soros Foundation programs filled the vacuum. As EU funding gained in importance in the second half of the 1990s, the pressure towards further institutionalization and “institutional procedures – lobbying, consulting on draft legislation, researching and writing reports and opinions, attending public meetings” increased even more (Hicks, 2004, p. 225). According to critical voices, the actual effect was to cripple the development of an autonomous environmental movement, because EU funding only reinforced the already established relations of donor dependency. Although EU funding strategy generally differs considerably from the earlier funding by emphasizing the long-term sustainability of NGOs, it nevertheless perpetuates the old pattern by continuing to distribute project-based funding. Thus, Fagan (2005) concludes:

On one hand the EU was, and still is, pushing local fund-raising and independence from donors, whilst on the other it offers direct funding for projects, mostly concerning conservation and eco-education that require NGOs to produce reports, liaise with business and government, and increasingly become involved with implementation and monitoring of environmental-policy initiatives – in other words, the type of funding context that NGOs were used to and arguably needed to move beyond. (p. 539)

The research on women rights’ organizations also demonstrates that the shift in the international context of funding, from the US and European foundations and governments to the EU funding, resulted in an increased dependency, further professionalization, and a decrease in the organizations’ autonomy to set their agenda (Hašková & Kolářová, 2003). Similarly to the environmental SMOs, Czech women’s groups have been dependent on external funding from the very beginning. However, while in the early 1990s these organizations were able to receive operational funding, the EU money is distributed on the basis of short-term project grants (Hašková & Křížková, 2006). In order to get this type of funding, organizations need to fulfill a number of formal criteria, which forces them to professionalize and ‘projectify’ their activities. Only formally registered organizations with offices and employees can qualify for EU funding.

At the same time, a relatively well-developed organizational capacity helps them adjust to the specific conditions attached to the distributed grants. The organizations are in need of continuous funding, but most of the funding available is project-based; therefore, they are forced to conceal costs not related to the project they apply for within the project's budget.

In general, in order to ensure their survival, women's organizations have had to adjust to the EU's mainstream reform agenda in the area of gender. Organizations that were unable to reformulate their agenda ceased to exist. A case in point is a Prague-based organization that due to the changed funding pattern had to transform its agenda to fit the EU sponsored programs, appoint as its director a professional fundraiser, employ more staff, and focus on grant applications and networking with public officials (Hašková & Křížková, 2006). Although except for very small groups (Kolářová, 2004) there were no radical feminist organizations even in the first half of the 1990s, the protracted dependency of the existing groups on the EU created a further obstacle for them to engage in some form of contentious action. As they seek cooperation with political authorities, there is no way for them to voice a radical agenda. It would de-legitimize their standing in the eyes of decision-makers. In the case of women's rights, this has been even further reinforced by the ideological climate in the Czech Republic that has been very unfavorable to the import of radical feminist demands even among the women organizations (Vráblíková, 2007).

The evidence presented thus far has pointed to dependency on foreign funding as an important reason for the advocacy organizations to professionalize their activities and moderate their strategies. According to some scholars, in order to facilitate the emergence of more autonomous and contentious social movement actors in the Czech Republic, the SMOs would have to change the revenue structure of their budgets in favor of individual contributions generated from within the country. It is argued that such a change would allow for a more independent agenda on the part of the local SMOs than is presently the case. This agenda would mirror the needs of local population instead of donors' requirements. In addition, as they would be freed from the reporting obligations towards donors, they would also be free to engage in more contentious collective action. Thus A. Fagan (2005) hopes for a civil society that would shift "from elite-level 'problem-solving' organizations that operate on the periphery of the elite, towards grass-roots movements and organizations that view civil society as a vehicle for articulating alternative perspectives and opinions and for contesting power..." (p. 533). In order to approximate this ideal, "Czech environmental NGOs need to follow the West European example and acquire a larger membership base that would provide them with sustainable income" (p. 530).

As there is one important organization in the Czech Republic – Greenpeace – that followed Fagan's recommendation and became self-sustainable by 2002, we can tentatively test Fagan's claim and see whether the alternative funding strategy actually led to an alternative organizational development and a different set of political strategies. Greenpeace Czech Republic encountered severe financial problems in the second half of the 1990s that resulted in a decision by Greenpeace International to help devise a plan that would make the Czech organization fully self-sustainable. Greenpeace Czech Republic embarked on this reform plan in 1998 and planned to achieve financial sustainability by 2001. In order to meet the plan's objectives, the organization hired more

professional fundraisers, and a former business manager was appointed as director. Hence the ambitious goals of the plan actually contributed to the increasing professionalization of the organization, and introduced more formalized management techniques.

There were consequences for the organization's agenda as well. As Greenpeace sought to find resonance with broader public opinion, it refrained from some controversial campaigns that were taking place at that time in the Czech Republic, such as the campaign against the completion of construction work on the second Czech nuclear power plant Temelín. Although Greenpeace International pressed the Czech group to engage on the issue as it did in the early 1990s, it was not deemed wise by the local organization at the time of the reform plan because it could discourage potential contributors. Although there was a robust campaign against the power plant in the late 1990s (dominated by the foreign funding-driven Rainbow Movement – the Czech member of Friends of the Earth), public opinion was constantly supportive of completing the plant (Public Opinion Research Centre 2001). Thus, it was decided by Greenpeace to create the kind of 'campaign mix' that would be more attractive to potential supporters, and avoid too-controversial issues, at least until the program's goals were achieved (interview 2):

Having been in the middle of the reform plan aimed at self-sufficiency... so, several people in the office just feared going into very controversial issues. And Temelín before completion in 2000 was still very controversial issue... Naturally, for forests, whales and for these explicitly green issues, one can get support easier than for smoking power plants. It is generally known and it is related to something, which is called the appropriate campaign mix...

As a result, the Czech organization focused on whales, and its campaign helped the country to get into the International Whaling Commission to tip the balance in favor of the so-called anti-whaling states. In other words, Greenpeace focused on improving its 'campaign mix', which actually meant moderation and avoiding political controversy, which could arouse a negative public response. As a result of professionalization and a non-controversial stance, Greenpeace won its battle over finance and managed to recruit a sufficient number of individual contributors by 2002 (see Table 2).

The results in terms of organizational development and the strategy choices made by Greenpeace heavily resembled the organizations that remained dependent on foreign funding. In the case of Greenpeace too, one could observe a tendency towards professionalization and moderation. Though via different route than the foreign-funding-dependent organizations, Greenpeace ended up in a situation like that of a professionally-driven public interest group. Moreover, like foreign-funding-dependent organizations that are forced to devote substantial resources to grant management; i.e. to administration, Greenpeace devotes substantial resources to maintaining itself as a self-sufficient organization. It spends important part of its budget on fundraising (see Table 6), and four of its 14 employees work as full-time fundraisers (interview 2).

[Table 6 about here]

Independence from grants did not allow Greenpeace to become an agent challenging the system. In fact, in order to make itself 'sellable' on the domestic market, the organization had to adjust to the demands of domestic public opinion. One cannot but

ask whether it was not the foreign-money dependency that actually *enabled* some organizations to swim against the current of public opinion and voice an agenda that would otherwise never find its way to the public debate, such as that over the Temelín nuclear power plant. A very similar situation occurred with the issue of ‘domestic violence’ that was set for domestic women’s groups by their foreign partners, and would probably have never made it to the political arena without them, given the way the issue was denigrated and even ridiculed in the country in the beginning of the 1990s.

Conclusions

In this paper I first diagnosed the state of political activism in ECE, then drawing on the recent paper by Tarrow and Petrova I differentiated between participatory and transactional forms. Subsequently, I asked what the reasons were for the emergence of transactional activism in ECE. Using evidence from the Czech Republic, I endeavored to show that the conditions for ‘transactional activism’ were created by foreign programs of civil society promotion that enabled, to put it in the words of T. Skocpol (1999), ‘advocates without members’ to populate East European civil societies. These programs helped spread the organizational model of advocacy NGO throughout the region. Contrary to gloomy analyses presented by the critical scholarship on democracy promotion, I claimed that although these programs indeed failed to build membership-based organizations, they nevertheless succeeded in creating the conditions for relatively effective policy advocacy to emerge in the region. By doing that, they undoubtedly helped local democracies to develop the infrastructure of interest mediation, although this happened without a corresponding development in terms of increased citizen participation.

The one-sidedly negative diagnosis of East European civil societies found in the critical literature betrays more the ideological preconceptions of their authors than the actual development on the ground. By criticizing the ability of East European civil society organizations to mobilize a wide following, these authors project a participatory notion of democracy into their analyses, and measure the reality of East European politics by a highly idealized yardstick. Thus I claim that it is these critics rather than the democracy promoters, who have assumed in this literature the role of the ‘usual suspects’, who have applied an idealized neo-Tocquevillian notion of civil society for the analysis of East European civic life. As they do not see their radical visions of participating citizenry thrive in the region, they conclude that there is actually no civic life worthy of the name at all. In this paper, I intended to show that lack of participation does not necessarily mean lack of interest mediation. Moreover, some foreign-funding-driven organizations have proven to be more effective political actors than the supposedly autonomous indigenously-supported ones. Although I agree with the critics that this development brought with it professionalization and moderation on the side of SMOs, I doubt the validity of their assumption that the shift from international to indigenous funding would bring a perceptible change in the organizational development and action repertoire of the SMOs.

What type of democracy did foreign funders help create in the region? It is safe to say that the participatory vision has never materialized. One should, however, ask whether it was reasonable in the first place to expect such development. Probably one should opt for a more realistic approach to political activism in ECE, and see that by

creating conditions for civil society actors to organize and obtain resources, the democracy promoters managed to substantially contribute to the increased accountability of state institutions in ECE, although they did not (and probably could not) induce the masses to actively participate in politics. Therefore, I claim that these programs contributed to the building of liberal democracy as opposed to participatory democracy (see Table 7).

[Table 7 about here]

Table 7 presents a typology of democracy based on two dimensions. Four models (one of them non-democracy) are differentiated on the basis of the importance they attach to direct participation and the rule of law respectively. In the liberal understanding (the lower-left quadrant), democracy is tantamount to the kind of institutional and procedural setting that ensures a fair competition among various conflicting interests in the society (Shapiro, 2003). Political participation is given only instrumental meaning in this model – it provides a means for problem-solving. It is expected to help solve social and economic conflicts that cannot be resolved by individual actors without collective cooperation. Civil society organizations in this model are expected to ensure basic transparency of the political process and to make the political elite accountable for its decisions. In other words, it is expected to ensure the accountability of formal political institutions. In order to achieve that goal, civil society does not need to ensure active participation; the transactional capacity of civil society actors is sufficient in this model.

In the participatory understanding (the upper-right quadrant), it is not impartial rules that set the limits for political competition, but the formation of a ‘general will’ within the framework of common deliberation of a political unit, which gives democracy its true meaning. While the liberal understanding is based on the notion of private autonomy (negative freedom), the radical notion draws on the concept of public autonomy (positive freedom). Thus, participatory democrats criticize the liberal notion of freedom from politics, and promote instead freedom as active participation. “On the liberal reading, citizens do not differ essentially from private persons who bring their pre-political interests to bear vis-à-vis state apparatus. On the [participatory] understanding, citizenship is actualized solely in the collective practice of self-determination.” (Habermas, 1996, p. 498) According to this model, civil society is expected to ensure direct participation of individuals in collective deliberation (i.e. participatory activism).

The model of deliberative democracy (the upper-left quadrant) innovatively integrates the liberal notion of impartial rules with the radical-democratic concept of participation: “In agreement with [the participatory model], it gives center stage to the process of political opinion- and will-formation, but without understanding the constitution as something secondary; on the contrary, it conceives the basic principles of the constitutional state as a consistent answer to the question how the demanding communicative presuppositions of a democratic opinion- and will-formation can be institutionalized.” (Habermas, 1998, p. 248) Deliberation is no longer expected to take place within the framework of the whole political community, but within the decentralized infrastructure of civil society on all levels of decision-making. Thus, this model presupposes the existence of open and accessible platforms of political deliberation and actually strives for the opening-up of public space. Civil society in this understanding is expected to provide a means of open communication and deliberation.

Drawing on this typology, one can safely infer that the conditions for participatory democracy have not been met in ECE. In this respect, however, ECE countries do not differ from the established democracies. Post-communist countries moved from non-democracy (the lower-right quadrant), where ‘civil society’ organizations served the purpose of social control, to a situation that can be described with the help of the notion of liberal democracy, probably with some deliberative elements. However, the situation varies among different states, and without a proper operationalization of the three general ideal types one can only speculate on the exact combination of liberal and deliberative aspects in the actually existing regimes. Therefore I leave this question for the forthcoming research. For the time being, suffice it to say that the failure of democracy promoters to bring to life the participatory democratic vision does not necessarily mean that democratic regimes in ECE are unviable.

¹ In Howard’s study (2003, p. 58-59), the group of older democracies include Australia, Finland, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, US, and W. Germany. The category of post-authoritarian countries consists of Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, the Philippines, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The sample of post-communist countries comprise the Czech Republic, Eastern Germany, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

² The number even dropped in the subsequent years, but has risen since 2001 as the result of the concerted effort of the organization to broaden its base of individual contributors (interview 1).

³ As S. Henderson (2003, p. 5) summarizes: “By the end of the 1990s, the U.S. government was spending almost \$ 700 million a year on democracy promotion programs, distributed to roughly one hundred countries in Latin America, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.” In addition to governmental programs, a host of other agencies such as intergovernmental organizations and private foundations also became involved in civil society building programs.

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Table 1: Composition of NGO Employment, ECE 1995/96

Culture and Recreation	35%
Education	18%
Social Services	12%
Professional Associations and Unions	11%
Health	8%
Development	6%
Environment and Advocacy	6%
Other Fields	4%

Source: Adopted from Toepler & Salamon, 2003, p. 370.

Table 2: Earned Income and Contributions by Individuals (% of total revenues)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Rainbow Movement	16.6	11.7	7.9	13.4	15.5	23.3	26.7	33.9
South-Bohemian Mothers	4.6	2.6	1.2	0.9	-	-	-	-
Independent Social-Ecological Movement	-	11.1	7.3	6.7	5.0	2.9	-	6.7
Greenpeace CR	-	-	50.4	74.4	92.2	83.9	69.0	75.9
Children of the Earth	-	10.0	9.3	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Annual Reports. Calculated by author.

Table 3: Public Sector Funding for NGOs According to their Focus Areas (1999)

A. Main areas (total)	98%
1. Social Services	27%
2. Health	13%
3. Environment	3%
4. Culture	12%
5. EU pre-accession	1%
6. Sport and recreation	31%
7. Ethnic minorities	1%
8. Social exclusion	12%
9. Consumer protection	0%
10. Emergency situations	2%
B. Other areas (total)	2%
Total	100%

Source: Adopted from Government of the Czech Republic, 2000, p. 15.

Table 4: Public Sector Funding for NGOs According to their Focus Areas (2003)

Areas	Ministries	Regions	Municipalities
1. Social services	35.66%	19.98%	15.05%
2. Health	7.83%	3.56%	6.12%
3. Environment	1.95%	5.67%	1.68%
4. Culture	11.18%	21.46%	14.70%
5. EU pre-accession	0.57%	0.15%	0.22%
6. Sport and recreation	33.93%	31.83%	54.25%
7. Gender equality	0%	0%	0%
8. Volunteering	0.03%	0.29%	0.09%
9. Ethnic minorities	1.72%	1.78%	0.76%
10. Social exclusion	6.38%	10.52%	6.57%
11. Consumer protection	0.53%	0.06%	0.00%
12. Emergency situations	0.22%	4.70%	0.56%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Adopted from Government of the Czech Republic, 2004, p. 9.

Table 5: Grant-based Funding (% of total revenues)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Rainbow Movement	75.1	77.6	86.8	76.6	79.4	73.3	65.6	49.6
South-Bohemian Mothers	81.9	95.9	96.6	79.7	-	-	-	-
Independent Social-Ecological Movement	-	86.7	90.6	89.0	76.8	95.3	-	47.3
Greenpeace CR	-	-	46.6	18.7	5.4	0	0	6.1
Children of the Earth	-	65.0	69.8	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Annual Reports. Calculated by author.

Table 6: Expenses of Greenpeace Czech Republic (% of total expenses; 2000-2002)

	2000	2001	2002
Campaigns	20.2	19.0	29.6
Media and communication	5.8	5.2	15.2
Fundraising	49.7	53.6	38.3
Administration and other costs	24.3	22.2	16.9

Source: Annual reports. Calculated by author.

Table 7: Models of Democracy and the Role of Civil Society (CS)
rule of law

		yes	no
direct participation	yes	model of deliberative democracy (Habermas); role of CS: ensuring communication	model of participatory democracy (Rousseau, contemporary radical Left); role of CS: direct participation (participatory activism)
	no	model of liberal democracy (Shapiro); role of CS: ensuring transparency and accountability (transactional activism)	non-democracy ; role of 'CS': social control