

FROM GLOBAL TO LOCAL FEMINISMS: TRANSNATIONALISM, FOREIGN AID AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN UKRAINE

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Mention of transnational feminism has grown increasingly frequent in discussions of how to mitigate the effects of globalization on women and other groups. Underlying these discussions is agreement that globalization has posed new political challenges for women throughout the world (Hobson & Lister, 2002). There is also much hope expressed that feminist transnational campaigns have the potential to unite women and other groups around a common agenda (Brenner, 2003; Evans, 2005). And yet questions have also been raised about a side of transnationalism that is often ignored: what happens to nascent local movements when transnational forms of feminism are transplanted across the globe (Alvarez, 2000; Gal, 2003).

Concerns regarding the local impact of transnational feminism have already sparked considerable debate and research about issues of sustainability that are squarely at the center of the current volume and are discussed in several other contributions. In key respects, claims regarding transnational feminism echo earlier calls to build "global sisterhood" (Morgan, 1984). These raised concerns regarding the relevance of feminism as it is commonly understood in the West to local movements elsewhere in

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the world (Mohanty, 2003). Studies that examine women's activism within a comparative context have found that "feminists, particularly from the industrialized Western world, have been apt to make sweeping generalizations about commonalities among women across globe. Such generalizations aggravate tensions not only along north-south lines but also along other lines of cleavage, including class, race, and sexual orientation (Basu, 1995, p. 19)." Furthermore, examinations of the impact of funding patterns have also demonstrated that far from uniting feminist NGOs and local grassroots activists around a common agenda, transnational activism has increased stratification among women's groups. Divisions result because of competition for resources that are provided mainly by the United Nations (UN) and by government foreign aid programs and foundations located in wealthy countries. These international donors typically prefer to fund groups with specific organizational characteristics, such as feminist NGOs that operate as "gender experts" and view local community groups as their clients (Alvarez, 2000; Brenner, 2003; Naples & Desai, 2002).

These issues are most fruitfully approached in a specific context (Basu, 2000; Basu & McGrory, 1995). The relationships between global and local forms of women's mobilization are extremely complex and difficult to untangle. Careful ethnographic studies that follow activists as they move across borders are a fruitful starting point (Burawoy, 2000). The following analysis builds on ethnographic work and interviews I conducted from 1998 until 2005 with foreign and domestic participants in Ukrainian transnational advocacy projects. In Washington, DC I interviewed the staff of projects that are funded by the US government and that manage democracy aid to Ukraine. I interviewed the founders, advisors, and staff of the largest of the partnerships concerned with women's rights that are funded by the US government in the former Soviet Union. I focused on how my interviewees became involved in US funded assistance to women's NGOs in Ukraine, what were their goals and methods of work, and who were their local partners. I then explored the same themes in interviews with over 60 local women's organizations in three Ukrainian cities. I also served as an election observer, attended meetings, protest rallies, conferences and other public events, reviewed one foreign-funded organization's grant records, read mission statements, final reports and analyses of women's activism, and had informal conversations on a regular basis with recipients of various forms of foreign aid.

My aim was to understand the consequences of over a decade of extensive foreign feminist involvement in post-communist women's movements. Post-communist countries such as Ukraine provide an opportunity to examine

the effects on local movements of a new type of transnational feminist activism. It evolved since the end of the Cold War and operates through Western programs that provide foreign aid to countries undergoing a transition from communist party rule. The primary goal of these programs is to integrate post-communist countries into global markets (Wedel, 1998). However, in response to pressure from advocates of democratization, foreign donors also introduced "civil society" projects. These projects employed transnational advocates to help expand citizen involvement in public life, increase public influence in policymaking, and strengthen civil society (Carothers, 1999; Sampson, 1996). Generally, studies have found that these aims have not been achieved (Abramson, 1999; Hemment, 2004; Henderson, 2003; Hrycak, 2002; Mendelson & Glenn, 2002). Indeed, in certain key respects, foreign intervention seems to have hurt, rather than helped, the development of civil society as a whole (Hrycak, 2005a, 2006; Mendelson & Glenn, 2002). My own interviews confirmed that participants agreed that foreign programs had raised important new issues. However, nearly all were disappointed with their outcomes and felt that donors and transnational advocates had not fulfilled their promises to assist in the development of Ukraine's women's movement.

Below, I use foreign aid to women's organizations in Ukraine as a site for exploring why Western donors as well as the transnational advocates and feminist activists they employ have not succeeded in fostering sustainable post-Soviet women's movements. I will argue that foreign aid has created opportunities for the invention of viable local "hybrid feminisms" – new forms of feminism that are localized and hence potentially more sustainable, than the forms of feminism that were introduced by foreign advocates. However, as I show below, the structure of foreign aid programs has also undermined local groups. Funding rivalries and frequent shifts in donor priorities have deepened divisions between organizations and prevented them from working together.

The next section examines the main debates about the impact that transnational activism has on local activism. I then explore how foreign and local feminists have viewed the women's movement in Ukraine. After this, I present the central patterns I discovered of the impact foreign assistance has had on the women's movement in Ukraine. In subsequent sections, I will provide a series of examples that demonstrate typical patterns of diffusion of local and foreign feminism. In order to protect the participants in my research from negative sanctions against them or their organizations by foreign funders or their staff, I avoid personal and organizational identifiers and present general patterns.

GLOBALIZATION, TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISM AND LOCAL MOVEMENTS

Three main claims have generally been made regarding the beneficial impact of increased global integration on local women's movements. First, increased global integration is said to create opportunities for local movements to participate in international conferences and partnerships with international organizations (Gray, Kittilson, & Sandholtz, 2006; Sassen, 1998, pp. 96–97). Second, it is said to help local movements participate in transnational networks that work together on global issues such as trafficking or domestic violence and are able to exert pressure both on transnational organizations such as the UN and the European Union and on national states to adopt policies that support norms of equality for women (Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Moghadam, 2000). Third, it is argued that both these forms of cross-border contact create opportunities for learning feminist framing strategies that focus on gender equality and freedom of choice and are superior to local forms of activism that are organized around motherhood or "parochial" identities (Sassen, 1998).

Researchers exploring the impact of transnational NGOs have come to the conclusion that these new forms of activist sponsorship are not as uniformly beneficial throughout the world as general discussions of globalization often claim (for a review, see Smith, Chatfield, & Pagnucco, 1997a). They have found that just as in the past, new transnational forms of activism tend to originate in wealthier countries (Smith & Wiest, 2005). The set of issues, norms, and master frames that dominate global campaigns reflects this geography of activism (Smith, 2002). In their examination of several major types of transnational advocacy, Keck and Sikkink (1998) conclude that transnational campaigns that are successful tend to be coordinated by transnational advocacy networks that focus on a small number of target issues that reflect the interests of Western sympathizers. Transnational activism thus typically overlooks numerous groups that fail to frame their grievances in terms of recognizably Western causes.

What is more, transnational activism alone cannot help struggling local groups to become a powerful movement. Local challengers need to develop strong local mobilizing structures and collective action frames with local resonance. Smith, Pagnucco and Chatfield examined a wide variety of transnational social movement organizations and concluded that their local impact is conditioned by "preexisting mobilizing structures, the political opportunities inherent in national, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental contexts, and by strategies to mobilize resources to act" (Smith, Pagnucco, &

Chatfield, 1997b, p. 60). Ironically, however, transnational mobilization can inadvertently weaken the potential of nascent grassroots movements by (1) encouraging the adoption of collective action frames that are ill suited to local contexts, thus isolating local groups from the populations they serve, (2) increasing competition among similar groups for foreign funding, and (3) discouraging local groups from engaging in local politics and encouraging them instead to devote themselves to the causes and concerns of activists and sympathizers abroad (Tarrow, 1998, 2005).

FEMINISM AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN UKRAINE

Tens of thousands of women became active in public life during the tumultuous final years of Soviet rule. Several different kinds of women's associations formed in Ukraine after it declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. They were showing promising signs of developing into a movement that would help women develop political power (for an overview, see Hrycak (2001)). These new groups attracted women who were, and remain, deeply engaged in local public life. They pursued issues that have strong resonance with local understandings of public problems. Their aims included the revival of religious and national traditions as well as expanding the involvement of women in public life, in particular, to reform the state's treatment of children and families (Pavlychko, 1992, 1997).

The women's movement that emerged from these activities constructed a new collective identity for women as activist-mothers. The movement's discourse was not based on Western feminist ideas about emancipating women from patriarchal power. Instead, it was based on a nationalist discourse of "empowered motherhood" that focused on a mythic guardian of the hearth, the *Berehynia* (Kis', 2003; Zhurzhenko, 2001). The movement used this discourse for framing women's activism mainly around issues of nation building and children's well-being.

Foreign and local feminist scholars viewed this new identity very differently. Foreign feminist scholars considered it to be deeply patriarchal (Molyneux, 1994; Rubchak, 2001). Yet, local feminists argued that this new identity was a potential resource for involving women in public life. This is because it resonated with the understandings of women's roles that emerged locally in opposition to the official state socialist gender project (Kis', 2003; Zhurzhenko, 2001).

Some local feminists also saw this new collective identity as a potential resource for the development of a localized feminism. Zhurzhenko, for example, described the myth of empowered motherhood as “ambivalent.” She showed that it spurred productive debates among local feminists. These helped them shift away from viewing feminism as an “imported, western-centered” phenomenon and moved them closer toward constructing a “Ukrainian feminism” that had local relevance (Zhurzhenko, 2001, p. 1).

Indeed, local feminist scholars’ engagement with the origins of women’s activism in Ukraine has stimulated interest in local women’s groups and advocates that fought for women’s equality prior to Soviet rule (Smolyar, 1998, 1999). Scholars argue that despite post-Soviet stereotypes that claim that feminism is impossible in Ukraine, these earlier groups indeed gave rise to a specifically “Ukrainian feminism” (in Ukrainian, *Ukrainskyi feminizm*) (Khoma, 2000, pp. 23, 26). They view these groups and activists as proof that “feminism existed not only as a western European or American phenomenon, but that Ukrainian feminism carried out in national culture a no less important role in opening up theoretical discourse and creating a new type of Ukrainian woman, the woman-citizen, and creating the conditions for fundamental changes in the spiritual identity of the Ukrainian world of the twentieth century (Zborovs’ka & Il’nyts’ka, 1999, p. 20).”

FOREIGN AID AND THE UKRAINIAN WOMEN’S MOVEMENT

This emergent women’s movement might have been expected to flourish in subsequent years. It possessed many of the resources theorists believe are most critical to collective action: organizations, networks of activists mobilized around a distinct set of issues, and a common collective identity. It also had attracted local sympathizers who believed that feminist activism could be viewed as a local tradition rather than a foreign imposition. All that it lacked was funding, and this is what numerous transnational and international organizations seemed to offer local women’s organizations in post-communist countries.

All foreign donors agreed that women’s organizations were key components of civil society and were crucial to democratization. Relative to other groups active in civil society, women’s organizations received a great deal of grant support from foreign donors. Projects to develop women’s organizations received generous grants from all major civil society projects in the countries of the former Soviet Union. The funders that invested the most

resources into women's projects in Ukraine were the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Renaissance Foundation, the UN Development Program, the European Union's Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States program, and the Canadian International Development Agency (Hrycak, 2006; Sydorenko, 2001a). These foreign funders created many opportunities for local scholars and advocates to travel abroad. They also focused on financing the development of NGOs and NGO networks. Many projects provided small grants and training through transnational "partnerships" that paired local groups with a foreign advocacy group or nonprofit organization that introduced them to model programs and strategies for fostering gender equality, combating trafficking, fighting domestic violence, or fostering women's economic empowerment (Hrycak, 2002, 2006).

Foreign funding resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of organizations devoted to women's issues throughout the former Soviet Union. In Ukraine, the number of women's organizations registered with the state increased from 5 in 1991 to well over 1,200 in 2001 (Sydorenko, 2001b). Foreign funding helped aid the establishment of promising new types of organizations such as gender studies centers, battered women shelters, and microcredit projects. It made possible numerous seminars, conferences, and publications assessing the status of women in Ukraine and setting domestic agendas. More broadly, foreign programs raised awareness of transnational campaigns to raise women's issues. These have influenced Ukrainian policy-makers and resulted in the passage of laws to prevent domestic violence (2002) and ensure equal rights (2005), state projects to combat trafficking and assist victims of trafficking (2003), and a national plan to promote gender equality (2001–2005).

Despite these impressive achievements, serious problems plague the women's movement in Ukraine. Polls suggest that very few Ukrainian citizens know about the existence of women's organizations, most do not trust them, and only an insignificant number has ever participated in their activities (Smolyar, 2001). This may be the result of lingering distrust toward the official women's organizations of the Soviet era. The public's attitudes also may stem from the fact that the post-Soviet women's organizations with the greatest media exposure are based in local political machines that use women's groups during elections to distribute semi-legal "gifts" to senior citizens, needy families, and other vulnerable populations in exchange for their votes (Hrycak, 2005a).

But the public's lack of understanding and trust also reflects problems with the kind of activism that foreign projects have fostered. Foreign

funding is the major source of employment and resources among women's organizations in Ukraine today (Sydorenko, 2001a). The women's organizations that work most closely with foreign donors and transnational advocacy networks are small, professionalized, and elite groups that are modeled after Western NGOs. Foreign funders prefer to work with professionalized organizations because they deem them the most efficient and effective intermediaries for transmitting crucial foreign resources aimed at empowering women at the grassroots or community levels (Hrycak, 2006). Yet these organizations have nearly all failed to generate sustainable forms of activism that can coalesce into a broader movement that mobilizes grassroots women. Indeed, most professionalized organizations do little outreach work with the populations they "represent." They are oriented more toward networking with foreign advocates and spend a good portion of their time searching for funding from Western donors and participating in training exchanges with Western countries.

FOUNDATION FEMINISM

In the following sections, I will examine illustrations of the practices and assumptions that have served to complicate the outcomes of encounters between the Ukrainian women's movement, foreign funders, and transnational women's rights advocates. My focus will be on an elite group of transnational organizers I call the "foundation feminists" (Hrycak, 2006). Foundation feminists work for foreign foundations and women's rights programs. Most are US or Canadian citizens. A small number are expatriates, typically children of Ukrainian refugees who fled the Soviet Union during World War II. Only a few are "local" women who were born and grew up in the Soviet Union.

The foundation feminists work on projects that are integrated into foreign aid programs. These programs are designed and operated mainly by development agencies that in the past specialized in running development programs in "Third World" countries. Their programs to promote women's issues in post-communist countries were designed and administered by the same staff and initially used the same program materials as they employed in their development work elsewhere in the world (Kupryashkina, 2000). Later they switched to include staff and materials used to work with disadvantaged populations in their countries of origin. These staffing and programming practices result in a mismatch between the models these organizations employ and the local models that are embraced by activists in Ukraine (interview, US reproductive health NGO, December 8, 1998).

Career pressures encourage foundation feminists to promote the models that are prevalent in international development work. One illustration of how this in practice complicates their aims to strengthen local activism is provided by their projects to empower grassroots groups. Foreign donors expect staff to implement projects that are global and meet their industry standards. They reward employees who are able to carry out these projects on the ground. This in practice means that projects to “promote grassroots groups” are designed without any input from the local groups they intend to assist. Indeed, it is a great irony that foundation feminists I interviewed and observed generally believe they were working with groups they considered “very grassroots” (interview, US women’s rights advocate, December 11, 1998; interview, director of US grassroots development project, November 10, 2001). Yet, they in practice funded a small elite of professional groups created to carry out foreign donor projects. Foreign program staff looked down on and never funded the local groups that most resemble ideal-typical grassroots actors. Rather than viewing local grassroots actors’ understandings of women’s issues – which have strong public resonance – as a resource for mobilizing, development program culture condemns them as local “traditions” that deter progress toward gender equality.

Foreign women’s rights activists’ lack of sympathy for local women’s activism was evident to many of those I interviewed. This attitude alienated broader networks of activists. The impression that foreign women’s rights advocates had no real interest in local women’s activism or the issues it raised, of course, prevented recruitment of groups and potential leaders with experience in public life and protest.

LOCALIZING FOUNDATION FEMINISM

To address the poor fit between foreign and local understandings of women’s issues, some foreign programs recruit local activists to work for and adapt their programs. This is why a foreign program hired “Anna.” Anna was active in a local women’s association that formed within the independence movement. She recalls that before she was hired by USAID’s women’s rights program, US trainers worked through translators and were unfamiliar with local political life (interview, March 22, 2001). The issues and tactics they encouraged Ukrainian women to adopt were drawn from foreign contexts and had little applicability to local women’s real concerns. She recalled her experience of seminars the League of Women Voters sponsored in Kyiv:

I remember we were sitting at [an empowerment training]. The League of Women Voters had brought a woman to talk to us. We were upset because [independence movement

activist and member of parliament] Khmara had been arrested yet another time, and we had just come from a protest at the prison, and here she is telling us about how they convinced their local government to change how children's dental plans were paid for through insurance. We sat there thinking, "what insurance, what is she talking about?" We didn't have those problems.

For Anna and other seminar participants, there was no reason for them to fight for changes in children's dental insurance plans. The government in Ukraine claims to provide all citizens with free medical and dental care although in practice severe shortages of medicine often necessitate that patients supply their own drugs and other materials. But foreign advocates who parachuted in for two days to conduct a seminar in Ukraine typically possessed no knowledge of local conditions and made little effort to elicit discussions of what those attending their seminars considered to be the real local issues.

In response to such concerns, USAID projects hired local trainers like Anna to staff their programs. Local trainers lead sessions that resemble the seminars to handle issues of diversity and multiculturalism that are products of a veritable industry in the United States (Abramson, 1999; Hrycak, 2006). Critics fault such seminars for their banal assumption that trust can be built through performances in which participants confess their prejudices and give voice to their experiences (Mohanty, 2003). Indeed, such an individualized and psychologized response does not address local criticism of foreign programs. But foreign projects rarely incorporate effective mechanisms for using local input from the groups they serve.

HYBRID FEMINISTS

Foundation feminists have unleashed complex and contradictory pressures. But foreign projects that are funded for several years (rather than a few weeks, as is commonly the case) do become more locally oriented. These projects have played a positive role in facilitating the development of what I call "hybrid feminism" (Hrycak, 2006). As I show below, hybrid feminisms integrate local and foreign models of activism (Hrycak, 2002, 2006; Pavlychko, 1992, 1997; Phillips, 2000). Hybrid feminists do not typically work for development projects. They are often former leaders of the women's associations that emerged from the independence movement. Later they were trained in Western women's rights activism through foreign foundation programs. As a result, they are able to speak in both foreign and local activist idioms. They have greatly expanded the appeal of women's

rights activism in Ukraine by articulating foreign women's rights claims with those of national revival and by demonstrating how families and children can benefit from gender equality. This tiny but influential cadre of local converts has reframed the type of feminism foreign programs employ. They borrowed from Western feminism to develop local action frames that have a better fit for local understandings of women's issues.

Most hybrid feminists prefer not to use the term "feminism" in their work. They incorporate elements of the foreign models that Western actors promote into local models of women's activism that employ the myth of empowered motherhood. The result is a less individualistic form of activism that closely resembles what Karen Offen refers to as "relational feminism" (Offen, 2000). Typically, these newly crafted action frames speak of "equal opportunity," "gender parity," and "self respect" but avoid the term feminism itself. In practice, hybrid feminists also frequently employ maternalist discourse and many tend to place priority on improving opportunities for families, children, and young people. Two new issues that foreign programs raised have achieved considerable attention among local groups: the prevention of domestic violence (Hrycak, 2005b; Rudneva, 1999) and the need for gender quotas to increase women's representation in parliament (*Stanovyshche Zhinok v Ukraini: Realii ta Perspektyvy*, 2004).

Such reframing activities greatly helped recruitment to a women's rights network that USAID funded in Ukraine in the 1990s. Nearly all Ukrainian groups that joined this network trace their support for women's rights to the work of talented local organizers, initially active in the national independence movement, who were recruited to work for US foundations and women's rights projects in the mid-1990s (Hrycak, 2002). Once on the staff, they redefined Western women's rights seminars in terms of local concerns, translated program materials from English and Russian into the Ukrainian language, and adapted examples of Ukrainian women feminists drawn from émigré Ukrainian women's journals published abroad. These adaptations helped persuade broader-based networks of women that foreign women's rights activism was open to their issues and concerns. They improved the success of this women's rights organizing project.

Through participation in the activities of foreign programs that have become more locally oriented, various groups have altered their understandings of women's issues and roles. Women who established small mutual aid organizations have developed new self-understandings and an enhanced sense of confidence (Phillips, 2000). The "nationalist" women's associations that fought for independence from the Soviet Union (whose leaders asserted prior to Ukraine's independence that "they must first

liberate the nation” before undertaking an effort to liberate women (Rubchak, 1996, p. 317)) also started to speak of “their own kind of feminism” (“nash feminizm”) (interview, March, 2001).

Most early converts to feminism in Ukraine were Russian speakers who were distant from the independence movement. They at first regarded the “Ukrainian nationalists” who were recruited to foreign women’s programs with suspicion and claimed that they were opportunists who were attracted to the movement by the comfortable work conditions and monetary rewards that professional foreign program employees enjoy. But as time has passed, these Russian speakers have also entered into a dialogue with both foreign feminism and local hybrid feminism and have refashioned their identities and style of activism to reflect their own localization of feminism. In all these ways, the localization of feminism have made it easier to build broader support for women’s rights among women with various kinds of commitments to reforming Ukraine.

The broader population still does not embrace foreign activists’ concerns. And indeed, most women involved in public life are still wary of “feminism.” However, the hybrid feminists have helped to build the cultural foundations for a sustainable local feminist tradition that demonstrates that what had seemed to be an alien Western or Soviet ideology has relevance to women in Ukraine. They started the process of frame bridging and alignment that broadened support for women’s rights activism among national independence activists, making it more likely that the women’s rights movement will succeed in the future. The result can be seen in the increasing prevalence of the phrases “women’s equal rights” and “equality of opportunity” alongside the other demands expressed by various civic groups, even the “nationalist” women’s organizations that emerged from the independence movement.

THE IRONIES OF FOREIGN FUNDING

Transnational activism in practice not only spreads ideas about emancipation, it also acts as a channel for cross-border resource transfers that may seem small by Western standards. However, seed grants of one to two thousand dollars are significant infusions of resources in a country where the collapse of the economy has resulted in a catastrophic decline in living standards. Civic groups typically cannot find local funding for their organizations and look to foreign programs for support.

Yet common practices often undermine the ability of foreign programs to adequately fund the local groups they promise to assist. One illustration is

provided by donor expectations that lead foreign programs to encourage the formation of numerous new organizations rather than work to strengthen those that exist. USAID expects the projects that it funds to meet quarterly performance targets. For projects to develop local NGOs, these typically include establishing a certain number of new groups in a given reporting period and funding a certain number of projects per grant competition. According to one local employee of a USAID women's rights project, "when we wrote reports, and gave [performance] indicators that USAID uses to determine whether a program is successful or not, one of the indicators of success was when we came to a place that had no women's organizations [and] after we gave trainings with our initiative group, they started a civic organization (interview, March 22, 2001). As an incentive to help new groups, NGO development projects typically offered to help new groups apply for quarterly "in house" small grant competitions. With each passing quarter, however, there were more and more local groups competing for the same pot of money and making demands on the resources of the project. Although USAID could later report that there are now tens of thousand of advocacy NGOs devoted to issues such as women's equality, minority rights, and so forth, the competitive structure of NGO development programs meant that these groups rarely worked together.

Indeed, most new groups that form through NGO development projects rarely win grants in competition against experienced groups with reputations. For example, four young women formed a reproductive health group in 1997 after encouragement from a USAID women's rights NGO project (interview, April 12, 2001). They developed and conducted basic lectures on women's reproductive health. They soon found that there was a local demand for their lectures, but without a grant from a foreign foundation they could not afford the rent on the room where they held lectures, the traveling costs involved in giving lectures in other cities, or the costs of publishing their advice booklets. Discouraged by the time and energy needed to look for funding, the group dissolved. Even though they had found a local public interested in their group's advice, their lack of success with foreign granting agencies proved too discouraging. "We had developed quite a number of public lectures and we also gave consultations. But now that is all over, at least for the time being, because right now everyone is just struggling so much Maybe later on we'll be able to do something again." Such stories were common among fledgling new women's groups that were started with foreign encouragement but were unable to win foreign grants.

Frequent shifts in donor funding priorities have also undermined initially effective foreign projects. USAID's shifting priorities have had the strongest

impact. Once USAID priorities changed, many other foreign donors followed suit. In the mid-1990s USAID determined that a healthy number of women's NGOs exist in Ukraine. Since then, there is no longer sufficient funding for women's NGO development projects. To continue their work, foreign NGO development programs were compelled to reorient the aim of their women's rights initiatives to win other USAID grants. Most shifted from the development of women's rights advocacy NGOs to projects on the next hot button issue, the prevention of trafficking in women. Rather than aid the development of women's advocacy groups, foreign projects now strove to fund social service NGOs, credit unions, or small business incubators. Local organizations were forced to continually reinvent themselves accordingly. As one woman activist put it: "We are very dependent on funding sources. The program that has the dollars is the one that gives the orders. That is why an organization will try to find a way, if it is concerned with children, and there is an ecological program, to also think "what can I do with ecology?" In my opinion, this very much obscures their activities. The organization becomes too thinly spread out, because it has to be concerned with everything, and it can forget its mission, for which it was created. If it was created to help get women on their feet, then help them, and don't try to work on environmental issues" (interview, May 22, 2001).

Program shifts have increased divisions even in the large Eastern Ukrainian city that received by far the most foreign funding and encouragement. Early funding opportunities prior to the mid-1990s facilitated coalition building among local women's NGOs (interview, May 22, 2001). The city's gender studies center was the first formed in Ukraine. It attracted generous foreign grants and dozens of local recruits to feminism and women's rights activism. But later it lost most of its local support as the result of squabbles over foreign grants and foreign travel opportunities. The sense of local solidarity that existed during the early 1990s, years when grants were plentiful and few women's groups competed for them, died. This solidarity has been eroded as some groups have accumulated considerable funding by working on issues donors raise, while others that remain focused on local issues have been left behind. As one local women's activist told me, "On paper, [our city] has over fifty registered women's organizations. But many exist only on paper, a few work from grant to grant, and only a few are continuously active" (interview, May 13, 2001). She and others attribute the prevalence of "paper organizations" and deep divisions among women's initiatives in this locale to shifting donor priorities and increasing competition for grants.

CONCLUSION

General discussions claim that new global processes that help spread transnational feminism should also strengthen grassroots movements. Why, then, are local participants in the women's movement so disappointed with the impact of transnational feminist activism and foreign aid? In Ukraine, increasing contact with transnational women's rights advocates has weakened the local women's movement by introducing tendencies that previous studies of transnationalism have found to weaken grassroots mobilization: encouraging the adoption of collective action frames that are ill suited to local contexts, increasing competition among similar groups for foreign funding, and encouraging local groups to devote themselves to the causes and concerns of foreign donors.

Foreign aid programs, in particular, projects that USAID sponsored, have not provided a strong basis for sustainable grassroots feminism. At first, this was because foreign donors set their own priorities, introduced global models that were a poor match for local conditions, and employed women's rights advocates that possessed no local knowledge or experience. But over time, many local women's NGOs were formed around a hybrid feminist agenda that blended some of the issues these transnational advocates raised with local concerns regarding the well-being of children and families. The result has increased local support for the prevention of domestic violence and for increasing the representation of women in parliament. However, foreign program practices undermined these hybrid feminist efforts by distributing resources in ways that rewarded only those few groups that worked professionally with donors. They did not adequately fund the numerous local organizations and coalitions they formed. Thus, promising new hybrid feminism campaigns failed to get off the ground. Most hybrid feminist organizations did not develop the capacity for sustainable activities and very few participate together in political campaigns today.

The future sustainability of feminism in Ukraine will depend upon building on the potential of hybrid feminists. It is crucial to create local sources of financial support that are long term (lasting several years) and are designed with genuine local input. Hybrid feminists have accomplished important work by adapting foreign activism frames to local issues. However, to build on their work it is important to create stronger local foundations for sharing resources and encouraging cooperative activities to avoid the fate of early coalitions of feminists that dissolved under the pressure of grant competitions and shifting donor priorities.

What does the Ukrainian case suggest are the conditions that might foster sustainable women's movements in the future in post-communist countries? My research suggests that foreign advocates should encourage the invention of "hybrid feminisms" that blend Western and locally produced action frames. In Ukraine, such frame bridging helped to demonstrate the local relevance of new transnational issues such as the prevention of domestic violence to local networks of non-feminist women in Ukraine. However, the future strength of the localized feminisms that result will also depend upon successful engagement of local feminists in domestic politics. Foreign aid providers and the women's rights advocates they employed assumed after the Soviet Union's collapse that progress toward women's empowerment depended principally on the development of feminist-inspired women's rights initiatives. These eventually led in Ukraine to the establishment of numerous hybrid feminist women's organizations. While these groups have helped to raise new issues such as domestic violence and the need to increase the political representation of women, this new wave of women's rights activism has been unable to develop sufficient domestic leverage to pressure the state and government to follow through on addressing these issues. Further research is needed to determine which local strategies will help local advocates of women's rights to improve their alliances with decision-makers in politics and government in their home countries. In the end, all politics is local, and this is true even in an age of increased globalization.

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