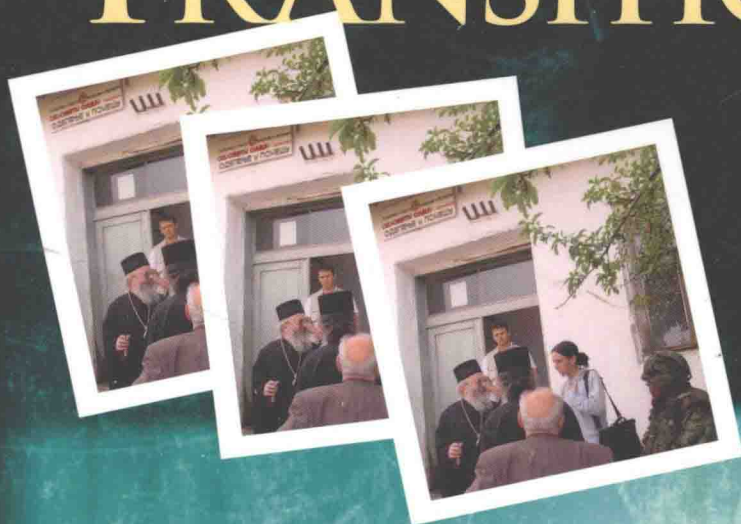EDITED BY
Keith Brown

TRANSACTING
TRANSITION

The Micropolitics of Democracy
Assistance in the Former
Yugoslavia

Transacting Transition

The Micropolitics of Democracy Assistance in the Former Yugoslavia

Edited by Keith Brown

Kumarian

Press, Inc.

Acknowledgments

Past and present Brown students Nathalie Hammink, Palin Ngaotheppitak, Lindsay Richardson, Sara Rothman, Jai Singh, and Phoebe Sloane provided valuable research assistance, and Matt Lawrence produced the maps.

Lastly, for their patience with the clutter mountains and late nights that came with the project, I thank the beautiful Americans Shelley and Chloe.

Sections of Chapter 1 (by Keith Brown) and Chapter 4 (by Paul Nuti) are reprinted from *Anthropology News* volume 46 issue 8 (November 2005), with the permission of the American Anthropological Association. The cover image is open source, reproduced from the website of the U.S. mission in Prishtina.

Acronyms

AAK	Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
ACDI/VOCA	Agricultural Cooperative Development International/ Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Activities
ADF	America's Development Foundation
CAIP	Community Action Investment Program
CAP	Community Action Plan
CBD	Community-Based Development
CDG	Community Development Group
CHF	Cooperative Housing Foundation
CIC	Community Improvement Council
CIDP	Community Infrastructure Development Program
CIP	Community Impact Program
CRDA	Community Revitalization through Democratic Action
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
DGGSE	Endowment for Democracy and Good Governance in Southeast Europe
DOS	Democratic Opposition of Serbia
DPS	Democratic Party of Socialists
DRA	Deputy Regional Administrator (UN)
DTI	Democratic Transition Initiative
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	General Accounting Office
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act
IC	International Community
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICG	International Crisis Group
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRD	International Relief and Development, Inc.
ISC	Institute for Sustainable Communities
KFOR	Kosovo Protection Force

KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army (also Ushtria Çlirimtare E Kosoves [UÇK])
KPC	Kosovo Protection Corps (also TMK)
KTI	Kosovo Transition Initiative
LCO	Local Community Officer (UN)
LDK	Democratic League of Kosovo
LEAP	Local Environmental Action Plan
LIFTS	Local Initiatives for Tolerance and Stability
MA	Municipal Administrator (UN)
MCI	Mercy Corps International
MPRI	MPRI (acronym only)
MRE	Mission Readiness Exercise
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OHR	Office of the High Representative (UN)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PCI	Peaceful Communities Initiative
PDK	Democratic Party of Kosovo
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
RA	Regional Administrator (UN)
RCDC	Rural Community Development Clusters
RFA	Request for Applications
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SDS	Serb Democratic Party
SO	strategic objective
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
TMK	Trupat e Mbrojtjes te Kosoves (Kosovo Protection Corps)
UN	United Nations
UNBRO	United Nations Border Relief Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (now the Refugee Agency)
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNV	United Nations Volunteer
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Contents

Figures

1

The New Ugly Americans? Making Sense of Democracy Promotion in the Former Yugoslavia

Keith Brown

THIS VOLUME OFFERS FIRSTHAND ACCOUNTS of American engagement in the nuts and bolts of promoting civil society and civic association in the western Balkans. Bringing together the perspectives of practitioners and scholars, it seeks to bridge the gap that, according to Alexander George, so often divides these two communities and prevents knowledge exchange (George 1993). It does so using an "issue history" approach that, in the words of Richard Neustadt and Ernest May, does not ask "what's the problem" but urges "tell me the story" (1986: 108). The shared goal of the contributors is to demonstrate the utility of reflective writing, grounded in what anthropologist Clifford Geertz famously termed "thick description," as a tool for individual and institutional learning about the real-world impact of US foreign policy (1973). Thomas Carothers, the leading exponent of qualitative, critical research on the theory and practice of US democracy promotion, recently noted that the bulk of learning on the subject still "resides in the minds of practitioners" and that the topic remains remarkably understudied (2004: 3). We trust that this volume will help to change that and hope that it will also provoke or inspire others to enter the conversation.

THE LESSONS OF THE PAST

In 1958 William Lederer and Eugene Burdick published *The Ugly American*, a collection of short stories that centered on the exercise of US foreign policy in the fictional Asian country of Sarkhan. They included a "factual epilogue" to emphasize their message, that without major course correction the United States would lose the war against Soviet-inspired communism. They drew a contrast between the well-thought-out, locally

responsive tactics employed by America's enemies of the day, who employed the best and the brightest in their foreign service, and the ill-informed and poorly directed efforts of US embassies abroad, frequently headed by political appointees with no feel for the language or culture of their posting. They noted the US preference for "big" projects, such as dams, highways, and irrigation complexes, which served only the interests of local political elites; in focusing attention on such "show" projects, they claimed, the United States was overlooking the small-scale investments that local economists saw as most needed—in improving stock breeding, developing small enterprises, and the like. The authors did include examples of individual Americans pursuing more locally responsive objectives, but in these stories their efforts were consistently undone by the bigger bureaucracy of which they were a part.

In the last story Ambassador Gilbert MacWhite, who speaks with the authors' voice, gives the following warning in a memo to the Secretary of State:

> The Russians will win the world by their successes in a multitude of tiny battles. Many of these will be fought around conference tables, in the rice fields of Asia, at village meetings, in schools; but mainly they will take place in the minds of men. Only occasionally will the battles be violent; but the sum of these tiny battles will decide whether our way of life is to perish or to persist. (Lederer and Burdick 1958: 266–267)

The book was a popular success; it was named a Book-of-the-Month selection and it sold two and half million copies in three years (Hunt 1996: 3). It also influenced policy: by January 1959, John F. Kennedy had had a copy sent to every member of the Senate, and he was motivated sufficiently by the message of the book—that citizen-to-citizen, local-level forms of assistance are effective—to create the Peace Corps during his presidency (Coyne 2002). Forty years later, the book's title was evoked by George W. Bush in his 2000 presidential campaign during a debate with then Vice President Al Gore: "If we don't want to be viewed any more as 'ugly Americans,' we must stop saying to the whole world: 'we do this and you should also do this'" (*New York Times* 2000).

REINVENTING FOREIGN ASSISTANCE: THE RISE OF DEMOCRACY PROMOTION

Although the image of the overreaching, crass American abroad conjured by Lederer and Burdick still resonates, much has changed. Several administrations have taken steps to reorganize US foreign assistance apparently

in response to the weaknesses portrayed in *The Ugly American*. The creation of the Peace Corps, for example, was just one part of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which marked the birth of the United States Agency for International Development, or USAID, and also the launch of President Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress" for Latin America (Smith 1991). Both initiatives were intended to link foreign assistance more effectively to the overarching US policy aim of winning the Cold War. The same impetus was transferred to a new conceptual realm when in 1982, during his first term, President Ronald Reagan announced his vision of "Project Democracy," which led to the establishment of the National Endowment for Democracy in 1983 (Carothers 1999: 30–44; see also Guilhot 2005: 83–87), with an agenda to support opposition to totalitarianism and communism.

Both of these visionary presidents saw foreign assistance as a key weapon in waging the Cold War. This hard-headed view, implicit in Burdick and Lederer's work, can be criticized as reflecting a deep-seated, rather one-dimensional paternalism that casts foreigners as children awaiting behavior modification (see, for example, Hunt 1996: 17). Another consequence of this view was domestic pressure to downscale US foreign assistance after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Those who believed that this was the "end of history" (Fukuyama 1992), casting this moment as the final victory of US values over the Soviet threat, argued that the weapons of development and democracy assistance had served their purpose and could be put aside. Focusing on a narrow conception of national interest, and skeptical as to whether such assistance programs justified their funding, critics of foreign aid won ground in domestic debates during the 1990s and oversaw the reduction of US foreign assistance to unprecedentedly low levels. In Congress, Senator Jesse Helms led the assault, which at one point threatened to do away with USAID itself (Berríos 2000: 14; see also Lancaster 2000; Helton 2002).

This debate, though, did have another side, which argued that US foreign aid was more than a weapon in the Cold War and tied it to the country's core values and mission in the world. For advocates of this position, the long history of the United States' commitment to democracy at home and abroad provided the rhetorical basis for the revitalization and reorientation of investment in foreign aid that the end of the Cold War demanded. This led to the announcement of a new "Democracy Initiative" by USAID in December 1990 (Diamond 1997: 313); President Clinton's first-term commitment to "democratic enlargement," which put human rights at the heart of foreign policy and saw the return to government of a number of Carter administration–era figures, including Warren Christopher, Anthony

Lake, and Madeleine Albright (Wiarda 1997: 82); the creation in 1994 within USAID of the Office of Transition Initiatives, with a core mission to assist transitions to democracy; and the proposed Peace, Prosperity and Democracy Act (Pinto-Duschinsky 1997: 301).

These two positions generally conformed to party lines and were expressed clearly during the second presidential debate in 2000, cited above. In this debate Governor Bush painted himself as a realist who would apply a strict criterion of the country's "vital interest" before committing resources—especially US military forces—to ill-defined "nation-building." Vice President Gore, in contrast, defended a broader, longer-term vision of national interest recognizable to idealists and multi-lateralists, arguing that the United States should exercise global leadership as it had done in its major investment, military and civilian, in the rebuilding of shattered societies in the aftermath of World War II.

In a (slightly) less polarized context, the same issues were discussed in academic circles. A host of authors debated the intellectual roots as well as the real-world effects of US development assistance, especially democracy promotion in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Russia, and eastern and southeastern Europe (Burnell 2000; Goldman and Douglas 1988; Lowenthal 1991; Wiarda 1997, 2003; Diamond 1997, 1999; Carothers 1991, 1999, 2004; Sawka 2000; Schraeder 2002; Cox, Ikenberry, and Inoguchi 2000; Samuels 1995; Smith 1994; Smith 2001; Van Rooy 1998; Vukadinovic 2001).[1] At times the language became ugly, as the authors made their own sweeping judgments. The Clinton administration's vision of "democratic enlargement" articulated by Vice President Gore, for example, was criticized for its "patronizing, condescending and even racist" attitudes, as well as its "unchecked idealism" (Wiarda 1997: 12). By contrast, the more instrumental view associated with Republican lawmakers, which—often explicitly—ties democracy promotion to the march of the free market and the material prosperity of the United States, has been criticized for its neo-imperialist agenda of resource extraction (Robinson 1996; see also Cox 2000).

Alongside the sometimes shrill outing of peacenik spendthrifts and greedy warmongers, however, runs a significant strand of pragmatically oriented scholarship, combining recognition of the balancing act involved in policymaking and commitment to constructive, albeit critical, engagement with practical as well as theoretical questions. This is especially evident in discussions of the component of democracy promotion on which this volume's contributors focus: aid to civil society. I will briefly lay out the terms of the debate that I find most compelling, before proceeding to explain what this book offers that is new to the debate.

THE SHIFTING DEBATE: CIVIL SOCIETY, CIVIC COMMUNITY, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Civil society has its own extensive literature. A key definition is offered by Michael Walzer, who uses the term to denote "the space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks—formed for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology—that fills this space" (1997: 7; cited in Shifter 2000: 248). Celestin Monga used a slightly different formulation derived from a European intellectual tradition when he cited the work of British jurist J.F. Moulton on the importance of citizen activism to expand "the domain of obedience to the unenforceable." "By this means," asserts Monga, "the democratic spirit becomes engraved in the collective imagination" (1996: 70). These two strands are both evident in the enormously influential work of Robert Putnam, whose provocatively titled *Making Democracy Work*, published in 1993, sparked a vigorous debate in academia that quickly spilled over into the policy world. Putnam's work emphasized the importance of what he called "social capital" for democratic prosperity. His case study was Italy, where he drew a strong contrast between the high density of citizen associations in the north and the enduring power of "familism" in the south, to explain the two regions' distinctly different trajectories of economic and political development.

As a number of authors have noted, Putnam's book benefited from its timing, as questions were then being raised over the future of the former Soviet Union and its eastern European allies. Putnam himself made the connection explicit, sounding a warning in his conclusion:

> Many of the formerly communist societies had weak civic traditions before the advent of communism, and totalitarian rule abused even that limited stock of social capital. Without norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement, the Hobbesian outcome of the Mezzogiorno—amoral familism, clientelism, lawlessness, ineffective government, and economic stagnation—seems likelier than successful democratization and economic development. Palermo may represent the future of Moscow. (1993: 183)

Putnam also spoke directly in the book to the limitations of external assistance, indicating that in Italy "implanted" organizations from outside generally failed and, by contrast, that "the most successful organizations represent indigenous, participatory initiatives in relatively cohesive local communities" (1993: 99).

Putnam's work captured the imagination of a generation of democratizers—including President Clinton himself, who quickly arranged a one-on-one meeting with Putnam. Although the preceding citations suggest a somber prognosis, practitioners and scholars were inspired by the promise Putnam's methodology represented. His work in Italy—later extended to the United States, where he drew the contrast between a more social capital–rich past, when people bowled together, and a socially fragmented present, in which they bowl alone (Putnam 2000)—was founded on the premise that the concept of a vibrant civil society so beloved by democratic idealists was in fact subject to scientific measurement. In his work on Italy, Putnam argued that specific indices (associational life, newspaper readership, referendum participation, and "preference voting" patterns) could be used to accurately chart "civicness" (1993). This approach was embraced by other scholars and applied to different settings, including, for example, post-communist Russia (Marsh 2000).

The publication of *Making Democracy Work* coincided with the Clinton administration's campaign to "reinvent government," which led to the Government Performance Results Act in the same year. USAID, in particular, with its reputation for inefficiency, was designated a "reinvention laboratory" (Berríos 2000: 1), to become a flagship of cost-effectiveness. The introduction of business methods saw an explosion in the extent of outsourcing of USAID's work, to both for-profit and not-for-profit agencies, as well as a new discourse including such terms as strategic objectives, benchmarks, "results-based management," and audit-based evaluation. For those who retained a belief in the value of civil society promotion, Putnam's methodology offered a way to bridge the gap between far-reaching, idealistic visions and bureaucratically mandated measures of impact. Fortuitous timing, then, undoubtedly contributed to the phenomenon, noted by Thomas Carothers, whereby Putnam's work found its way into arguments for the continuation of civil society assistance (Carothers 2000: 211; see also, e.g., USAID 2004).

Although Putnam's ideas continue to influence policymakers, they have attracted widespread criticism in academia (see Encarnacion 2003; Armony 2004). A more measured analysis is provided by Larry Diamond in a 1999 discussion of civil society that illuminates a key theoretical distinction that, as I discuss below, lies at the heart of this volume (1999: 218–260). Diamond argues that whereas Putnam—or, at least, many of his boosters—conflate "civil society" and "civic community," the two are not coterminous. Instead, argues Diamond,

Civic community is both a broader and a narrower concept than civil society: broader in that it encompasses all manner of associations (parochial included); narrower in that it includes only associations structured horizontally around ties that are more or less mutual, cooperative, symmetrical and trusting. By contrast, there are many organizations active in democratic civil societies—even civic organizations whose goal is to reform the polity or advocate human rights—that are not civic in Putnam's sense. (1999: 226)

This distinction, Diamond goes on to say, has negative consequences for such non-civic civil society organizations.

Instead of bringing together people as trusting equals cooperating in relations of "generalized reciprocity" and mutual benefit and respect, these organizations tend to reproduce within themselves hierarchical cultural tendencies of the wider society: vertical structures of authority and flows of information, asymmetrical patterns of exchange between patrons and clients, scant horizontal ties among the general membership, and weak levels of trust (at best). To the extent that hierarchy and suspicion rule the organization, cooperation becomes difficult, both among members of the organization and between it and other organizations. The organization then becomes dependent on a leader or ruling clique and may manifest a debilitating contradiction between its internal style of governance and the goals it professes to seek for the polity. (1999: 226)

Diamond, a scholar with one foot firmly in the policymaking camp, as he demonstrated in his service as senior advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq (2005), highlights an inescapable dilemma in the practice of democracy promotion. While the ideal end point is a citizenry interconnected by robust horizontal ties, international and domestic advocacy of the virtues of such a society involves vertical relations of power. Wider inequalities made evident in the different interests, stakes, and agendas of external actors intrude on even the most participatory projects of civil society building.[2] Some scholars devote their energies to highlighting the essential inconsistencies of the enterprise. In so doing, wittingly or not, they serve the agenda of the "realist" camp, which would do away with foreign aid in general, and easily caricatured civil society initiatives in particular, as fuzzy, liberal, wishful thinking. But as Diamond and Carothers demonstrate in their work, the core dilemma also presents opportunities for reflection, analysis, and learning: given this dilemma, how do individuals and organizations deal with it? This is the core question that the contributors to this volume set out to explore.

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV LABORATORY

The authors set their exploration in the context of almost 15 years of international efforts to promote "civic" or "civil" means of response to political tensions in the former Yugoslavia. Over that period, the republics of the former Yugoslavia have represented a major and evolving focus of international—specifically, North American and western European—attention. The escalation of political disputes to armed conflicts—in Slovenia in 1991, Croatia in 1991–1993, Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992–1995, Kosovo in 1999, and Macedonia in 2001—prompted a variety of interventions, including diplomatic, humanitarian, military, peacekeeping, and reconstruction initiatives. The experience of multifaceted, complex intervention in Bosnia, in particular, established a template for subsequent operations elsewhere in the region. In that republic, UN peacekeepers and a range of civilian relief agencies found themselves at first bystanders and later, by some accounts, facilitators of the very violence they had set out to prevent or at least mitigate. In one concrete example, humanitarian relief convoys were forced to "barter" their way through paramilitary checkpoints by handing over some of the food and supplies they were carrying, thus serving to provision armed forces who were waging war against civilian populations (Thornberry 2000). After Bosnian Serbian military forces carried out mass killings of captured Bosnian Muslim men in Srebrenica in 1995, the United States orchestrated military action against the Bosnian Serbs and waged a diplomatic offensive to secure the Dayton Peace Accords in 1995. Bosnia-Herzegovina emerged with a new consociational constitution that called for power sharing along ethnic lines, an international peacekeeping force 60,000 strong, a UN High Representative, a new set of pledges of foreign funding, and a plethora of international and domestic NGOs.

This muscular intervention was followed in 1999 by a US-led NATO air offensive against Serbian security forces in Kosovo, later extended to targets in Serbia. The air attacks followed escalating Serbian violence against the province's Albanian majority population and an attempt to broker a settlement at Rambouillet.[3] A variety of international agencies had been implementing relief and monitoring missions on the ground prior to the bombing; after a peace settlement and the withdrawal of Serbian forces from the province, military peacekeepers and a UN civilian administration entered, along with a host of nongovernmental organizations.

These two cases are described by Marina Ottaway as examples of "maximal" nation-building, where levels of troop presence and foreign investment reportedly have surpassed those in other parts of the world by a