

TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

School of Business and Governance

Department of Law

Veranika Prykhodzka

**INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
AND DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE IN BELARUS**

Master's thesis

Programme International Relations and European-Asian Studies

Supervisor: Antonius Johannes Hubertus Notermans, PhD

Co-supervisor: Roberto Belloni, PhD

Tallinn 2022

I hereby declare that I have compiled the thesis independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors have been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading. The document length is 15168 words from the introduction to the end of conclusion.

Veranika Prykhodzka  04.01.2022

Student code: 184481TASM

Student e-mail address: veronika.prihodko@gmail.com

Supervisor: Ton Notermans:

The paper conforms to requirements in force

.....
(signature, date)

Co-supervisor: Roberto Belloni, PhD:

The paper conforms to requirements in force

.....
(signature, date)

Chairman of the Defence Committee:

Permitted to the defence

.....
(name, signature, date)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	4
INTRODUCTION.....	5
1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DEMOCRACY PROMOTION.....	9
1.1. Conceptual foundation.....	9
1.2. What is effective democracy assistance?.....	10
1.3. Factors influencing the effectiveness of democracy assistance.....	13
1.4. Data collection.....	17
1.4.1. Selection of the participants, conduct of interviews.....	20
1.5. Construction of the dataset.....	21
1.6. Data analysis.....	22
2. DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE IN BELARUS WITHIN DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT.....	24
2.1. Domestic context.....	24
2.2. Democracy assistance in an international context.....	26
3. EFFECTIVENESS OF DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE IN BELARUS.....	31
3.1. Dataset.....	31
3.2. Effectiveness of democracy assistance by INGOs in Belarus.....	32
3.2.1 Temporal fluctuations in the type of democracy assistance in Belarus.....	33
3.3. Factors that impede effectiveness of democracy assistance in Belarus.....	34
3.3.1. Identifying the influence of the independent variables.....	36
4. DISCUSSION.....	39
4.1. Largely ineffective democracy assistance in Belarus.....	39
4.2. Causes of low effectiveness of democracy assistance in Belarus.....	40
4.3. Recommendations.....	46
CONCLUSION.....	47
LIST OF REFERENCE.....	49
APPENDICES.....	59
Appendix 1. Typology of the democracy assistance projects.....	59
Appendix 2. International democracy establishment in Belarus.....	61
Appendix 3. Interview questionnaire.....	62
Appendix 4. Non-exclusive license	64

ABSTRACT

During the 27 years of Lukashenko's authoritarian rule, the democracy score in Belarus has maintained a consistently low level. However, the 2020 presidential elections, which gave rise to unprecedented protests, show that democratic forces are growing in the country. The United States and the European Union have put much effort into promoting democracy in Belarus, including providing democracy assistance aimed at the development of a democratic civil society. Given this remarkable, but unsuccessful, push of the Belarusian people for democracy, it is essential to reevaluate the effectiveness of democracy assistance. The present research turns to this endeavor by asking two main questions: How effectively has democracy assistance been carried out by the international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in Belarus? What factors are responsible for the level of effectiveness? The study replicates Bush's multivariate research design to answer these questions, which required creating an original database. The database is constructed by means of structured interviews and analyzed with a set of correlation analyses. The research concludes that democracy assistance in Belarus by international non-governmental organizations is largely ineffective. The main reason for this derives from the interaction of the donors, INGOs', and Belarusian government motives and incentives.

Keywords: *Belarus, International non-governmental organizations, democracy assistance, effectiveness*

INTRODUCTION

Democracy assistance is donor state aid delegated to international, multilateral and domestic actors to design and/or implement programs supporting political-processes, civil society, governance and the rule of law in a third country (Bush 2015, 7). Since the establishment of autocratic rule in 1995, negative assessments of the effectiveness of democracy assistance in Belarus persisted in stakeholders' discourse (Silitski 2005; Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010; Pikulik, Bedford 2018). The negative views were driven by the impotence of civil society and the opposition (Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010, 3-4), on which the democracy assistance is targeted (Bush 2015, 7), to withstand the pre-emptive attacks of the authoritarian regime, such as governmental propaganda, independent media harassment, prosecution of political opponents and unregistered non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010, 3-4). There were improvements in the parliamentary elections of 2016 (Belarus Digest 2016) when representatives of the opposition parties were elected, and the democracy score rose from 6, 64 in 2016 to 6, 61 in 2017¹; however, the score stabilized in 2018 (Freedom House 2018) and the parliamentary elections of 2019 resulted in no representatives of the opposition (Klysinski 2019). Nevertheless, the 2020 presidential elections manifested that democratic forces are growing. In response to the rigged elections and the self-appointed government's excessive brutality against peaceful protesters, a wave of unprecedented large-scale protests and strikes involving all population sectors swept through numerous cities. Although unsuccessful in terms of regime change, the large-scale mobilization of people showed some positive impact of democracy assistance.

The key actors who implement democracy assistance in Belarus are US and EU international non-governmental organizations (Jarabik 2006, 89). The main INGOs - mainly American, had to close their activity in Belarus in 1996 due to the authoritarian regime's consolidation (Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010, 4-5). However, the US government continued to provide democratic aid, though not permanently (US Department of State, Foreign Operations Assistance: Belarus), and support INGOs to conduct the projects from outside Belarus (Jarabik 2006, 88-89). For instance, the INGOs linked with the American parties - the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) primarily aim to build democratic political institutions

¹1 is the most democratic and 7 - the least

and strengthen the capacity of the Belarusian political opposition (Commission on security... 2017; NDI, Belarus).

At the same time, the European donors initiated democracy assistance in Belarus in 1998 through TACIS - the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of the Independent States and the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) (Jarabik 2006, 90) and also encountered restrictions in their activities. Some of the European INGOs that are currently active include political party foundations, the EU initiatives, and member states' organizations. For example, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) of the German CDU. KAS primarily conducts educational projects, seminars, and dialogues by engaging with broad range of partners from youths to politicians and governmental representatives (Konrad Adenauer..., Belarus Office). In addition, the Swedish Forum Syd coordinates the work of civil initiatives, and fosters civil society development in Belarus (Forum Syd, Belarus).

In view of the latest events, a study of the effectiveness of democracy assistance in Belarus is extremely important and relevant because it allows us to reassess how well their work has been carried out (which is essential information for INGOs themselves), and to improve the performance of democracy assistance. Furthermore, this knowledge will assist in organizing future activity as the fight for democracy in Belarus continues. In addition, based on the experience in Belarus, the findings of this thesis can provide lessons for democracy assistance in other authoritarian contexts.

Hence, the research object is democracy assistance in Belarus, whereas the subject is international non-governmental organizations working on Belarus. The thesis will investigate two research questions: 1) How effectively has democracy assistance been carried out by the INGOs in Belarus? 2) What factors account for the level of effectiveness? The research replicates the multivariate design of Sarah Bush (Bush 2015), which required constructing an original dataset. Bush' design was chosen for several reasons. First, it focuses directly on the activities of INGOs – the main actors and the subject of this research. Second, this approach develops clear-cut indicators to assess the effectiveness of democracy assistance, and has the advantage of replicability. Third, given the reserach consensus, democracy promotion effectiveness is influenced by a host of factors, a multivariate design provides a more accurate approach as compared to a monocausal one.

To assess the effectiveness of democracy assistance effective and non-effective programmes will be distinguished, following Bush' classification. In turn, to assess the factors responsible for the effectiveness or lack of the effectiveness of democracy assistance, six independent variable are distilled from the research literature on democracy assistance. Those variables are: 1) observation and control, 2) importance of funding for organizational survival, 3) importance of access for organizational survival, 4) donors' preferences for measurable programs, 5) competition for funding, 6) professionalization of the INGOs. Also, the study will control for two essential variables: the strategic importance of Belarus to donor states and the Belarusian domestic context.

Data collection was done by means of structured interviews. For evaluation of the data, two correlation analyses are employed, with the first analysis examining the relationships between independent and dependent variables, while the second one is applied to assess the magnitude of the influence of the relevant independent variables.

By analyzing the effectiveness of democracy assistance in Belarus, the thesis enriches and updates the scarce research on this topic. The novelty of the research consists of: 1) quantitative assessment of the effectiveness of democracy assistance in Belarus in contrast to the primary qualitative accounts of previous reserach; 2) comprehensiveness of the design by not measuring the effectiveness of only a limited sample of democracy aid, such as media and civil society; 3) the systematization of democracy assistance programs implemented in Belarus by constructing a typology of effective and ineffective ones; 4) the first attempt of a quantitative assessment of the effectiveness of democracy assistance in Belarus, thus revealing the most acute problems in the field.

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows. The first chapter covers the conceptual background and identifies the dependent and independent variables on the basis of a review of the relevant international literature. In addition, the data collection method will be explained and justified. The chapter ends with an explanation of the methods employed to analyze the data. The second chapter provides a historical overview of democracy assistance in Belarus. The section related to domestic conditions describes the Belarusian regime's attitude towards international democracy assistance and pro-democratic society. The next section examines the international context, the relationship of Belarus with the main donor countries - the US and the EU, and analyzes the amount of their foreign aid to Belarus (US - from 2000 to 2019, EU - 2007-2019,).

The third chapter examines the effectiveness of democracy assistance conducted by the international non-governmental organizations with the use of Bush's typology of effective and ineffective programs. Next, it investigates the correlation between six independent variables and the three dependent variables related to ineffective democracy assistance – measurable, regime-compatible, and both types. Further, the level of influence of each independent variable that showed a positive correlation exerted on the share of ineffective democracy assistance is analyzed via regression analysis. Finally, the concluding fourth chapter discusses the findings and elaborates some recommendations.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DEMOCRACY PROMOTION

1.1. Conceptual foundation

According to Sarah Bush (2015, 6), *democracy promotion* is "any attempt to encourage another country to democratize, either via a transition from autocracy or the consolidation of a new or unstable democracy". Democracy promotion can be done via various means including sanctions, diplomatic influence or military intervention. *Democracy assistance*, in turn, is defined as "aid that states, international organizations, and other donors explicitly give to promote democracy abroad" (Bush 2015, 7). The main characteristic of democracy assistance is that it involves actors that receive donor funding with a commitment to advance democracy through the implementation of projects supporting political-processes, civil society, governance and the rule of law. These organizations constitute the main channels of democracy assistance and include government agencies, multilateral institutions, and *international non-governmental organizations*. For this study INGOs are defined as private, non-governmental, quasi-governmental and political party foundations. *Donor states* – engage in building democratic governance in non-democratic countries through financing democracy assistance. The non-democratic countries in which donors' governments promote democracy are referred to as *target states*.

There are several reasons why the governments of democratic countries engage in democracy promotion. According to Larry Diamond (1995, 5-9), democratic states believe that spreading democracy will ensure global and national security. An effective democratic order with the appropriate legal, electoral, and democratic institutional development can constrain hostile-expansionist behaviour of countries such as Russia and China. Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism, and immigration caused by political systems' failures and fuelled by political exclusion, social injustice, and tyrannical governance can be tackled by far-reaching democratic reforms, including good governance practices. In turn, ethnic conflicts can only be resolved with a substantial degree of democracy, providing legal protection of group and individual rights. Other hazards, such as the spread of nationalism, weapons proliferation, drugs, and environmental threats can be overcome by building a democratic system founded on

accountability, transparency, and openness. Secondly, democracy is seen to hold intrinsic value. Domestically, it respects peoples' liberties, competition, property rights, and the rule of law. Internationally – democratic countries are more reliable trading partners, environmentally responsible due to the need to be accountable to their citizens, and their openness makes it difficult for them to breach international agreements. (Diamond 1995, 5-9) Finally, the institutionalization of the democratic world order promotes peaceful coexistence between countries, as according to the democratic peace theory democracies are less likely go to war. (Mello 2016, 2-3)

1.2. What is effective democracy assistance?

The effectiveness of democracy assistance is the main dependent variable of the research. For several reasons, the most appropriate way to measure it is the classification of democracy assistance programs Bush uses. First, Bush's typology allows analyzing the actual substance of democracy assistance, which is paramount for understanding its effectiveness as knowing the substance enables one to determine if it is actually designed to promote democracy. Second, it provides a clear-cut typology of effective and ineffective programs, which can be measured empirically.

Bush's approach entails classifying programs into tame or untame, depending on whether the projects confront incumbents in target states. Tame programs are those that "*have played directly into strategies of authoritarian survival*" and untame democracy assistance abstains from this (Bush 2015, 65). "Tame" will be considered a synonym of ineffective democracy assistance, whereas "untame" denotes effective programs. Bush's classification consists of three major types of democracy assistance: not-regime-compatible, measurable, and regime-compatible (*Ibid.*, 57-63). Not regime-compatible (confrontational) programs are considered effective because they seek to alter the nature of the authoritarian regime by advancing open and fair political competition and mobilizing independent groups. By pursuing regime replacement, confrontational programs promote a fundamental element of democracy - change in power, which even minimalist definition of democracy assumes (*Ibid.*, 60-61). The first type of ineffective democracy assistance is measurable programs. They "are linked to quantitative, country-level indicators, which can document a country's progress (or failure) on a specific dimension" (*Ibid.*, 57-58). For example, a positive impact of a media program can be traced to the advancement of the Freedom of the Press score. However, these programs are seen as tame

(ineffective) because the democratic progress they illustrate with a country-level indicator does not reflect the causal impact of a measurable program, which is generally difficult to identify due to the disagreement about the evaluation criteria, methodological issues such as selection bias, and other reasons (*Ibid.*, 57-58). In addition, there is some evidence that such programs reinforce authoritarian survival (*Ibid.*, 65). Regime-compatible programs are another type of tame (ineffective) democracy assistance. They are seen so because they are not aimed at regime change as they do not foster political competition or popular mobilization; they are “*programs that target-country leaders view as unlikely to threaten their imminent survival by causing regime collapse or overthrow*” (*Ibid.*, 60). The variation of these three groups forms two additional types of democracy assistance, tame - measurable and regime-compatible (bears characteristics of both ineffective types), and partly tame - not-regime-compatible and measurable (partly ineffective as bears measurable characteristics). (see Table 1)

To measure the effectiveness of democracy assistance in Belarus, all 20 projects (see Table 1) will be classified according to the four types of democracy assistance. They include one effective type - 1) not-regime-compatible (confrontational), and three ineffective types - 2) measurable – includes measurable/non-regime compatible programs classified by Bush, 3) regime-compatible, 4) and measurable and regime-compatible. The first type includes 6 programs, two projects fostering free and fair political competition: (1) political parties, and (2) research (by putting the data about public attitudes in open access and thus discouraging people’s compliance with the regime); and three programs related to mobilization of independent civil society groups which historically shattered the authoritarian regimes by creating alternative power centers and promoting political participation: (3) political dissidents, (4) unions, and (5) youth (excluding apolitical programs such as sport clubs).

Measurable democracy assistance consists of 3 programs, two of which are measured with cross-national indicators (1) human rights, (2) media and the last one – (3) elections are evaluated, according to the international practices, with the presence of credible election monitors. According to Bush's classification, these three measurable programs are ambiguous (see Table 1). On the one hand, they can be considered ineffective because they are measurable and provide tangible results, which, however, do not reflect the real impact of this program on the democracy level. (Bush 2015, 59-60) On the other hand, they are non-regime compatible and if implemented effectively, promote free and fair political competition the free exchange of political information (*Ibid.*, 61). In the frame of this research, they will be considered measurable and thus ineffective for several reasons. According to the previous research, the local partners of the INGOs - non-

governmental organizations in Belarus, who apart from other activities were engaged in human rights and media strengthening were reluctant to reach the non-opposition mainstream society and became rather donor oriented than result-oriented forming a "democratic ghetto" (Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010). It implies that their work did not focus much on achieving change in Belarus but instead on winning the donors' support, and thus has been more measurable than confrontational. Although the development of social media recently showed effective results in reaching a large share of the population and revealing the electoral and human rights violations (Shotter, Seddon 2021), they were effective only recently. In addition, those media projects promoted in Belarus focused on online-media development – a different realm (Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010, 9). Further, although elections monitors have been present and encouraged the free exchange of political information by revealing the fraud, they did not improve the electoral quality in Belarus as the elections had always been rigged (Silitski, 2005). At the same time, negative reports encouraged the dictator to crackdown on civil society (Silitski 2005; Libereco 2021) which had detrimental consequences for the democratic development in Belarus in the long term and thus reinforced authoritarian survival.

The third type - regime compatible democracy assistance_includes 6 themes including four apolitical civil society projects: (1) civic education, (2) civil society (residual), (3) conflict resolution (4) humanitarian aid, and two capacity-building projects that require cooperation with the authoritarian regime (5) legislative assistance, (6) the rule of law (Bush 2015, 62). The last group, measurable and regime-compatible programs, includes 6 projects and involves four projects simultaneously linked with cross-national indicators and requiring cooperation with the incumbent (*Ibid.*, 59-62): (1) business, (2) good governance and (3) local governance, (4) women's representation; (5) constitutions (measured with religious freedoms, proportional systems of representation in parliament and others); and one project simultaneously linked with cross-national indexes and having features of an apolitical civil society project, that is (6) woman's groups (addressing apolitical issues such as domestic violence). Although good governance may include projects related to corruption that can be politically explosive, since this is a capacity-building project that requires governmental cooperation, the regime will permit them only in a non-threatening way (*Ibid.*, 62). (see Table 1) For the full description of the projects, see Appendix 1.

Table 1. Classification of democracy assistance programs

	Measurable	Not measurable
Regime-compatible	Business and enterprise Constitutions Good governance Local governance Women's groups Women's representation	Civic education Civil society (residual) Conflict resolution Humanitarian aid Legislative assistance Rule of law
Not regime-compatible	Elections Human rights Media	Dissidents Political parties Research Trade unions Youth

Source: Bush (2015, 57)

1.3. Factors influencing the effectiveness of democracy assistance

The second research question inquires what factors are responsible for the level of effectiveness of democracy assistance in Belarus. To reveal these factors, the study reviews the existing literature on the effectiveness of democracy promotion to identify the most important ones. The factors identified in more than one study that potentially have a negative impact on the effectiveness of democracy assistance are the following: 1) INGOs' survival interests in terms of obtaining donor funding (Bush 2015; Pikulik, Bedford 2018) and 2) access to the target country for program implementation (Bush 2015), 3) the donors' poor observation and control of their agents (Bush 2015; Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010), 4) donors' request for measurable outcomes (Bush 2015; Pikulik, Bedford 2018), 5) competition between INGOs and 6) professionalization of the implementing organization (Bush 2015; Pikulik, Bedford 2018), 7) the strategic relevance of the target state to the donor states (Bush 2015; Zukowska 2016; Pikulik, Bedford), and 8) domestic context of the target state (Silitski, 2005; Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010; Lavenex, Schimmelfennig 2011). The research focuses on analyzing all of these independent variables because of having been identified in various studies. Moreover, a multivariate approach will provide the opportunity to obtain an objective picture of what factors are accountable for the level of effectiveness of Belarusian democracy assistance. In particular, six of them will be studied as independent variables, and two will be employed as control variables. They are considered in more detail below.

The first two independent variables refer to the INGOs' survival interests - pursuit of donors' funding and access to the target state. The negative effect of the INGO's search for funding for institutional survival is emphasized by Bush, who argues that to obtain funding, INGOs want to signal success to the donors and, as a result, implement measurable programs which provide "tangible outcome indicators" but do not show real causal impact (Bush 2015, 40). This is evident in Belarus as well; the need for funding pushes the INGOs to adopt programs that guarantee smooth implementation but not real effects (Pikulik, Bedford 2018, 17). Therefore, the expectation is that the stronger the INGOs' concern for donor financing, the more they will want to implement a higher share of measurable or partly measurable programs. Another variable with potential detrimental impact on effectiveness is the INGOs' need for access to the target state. Bush argues that the INGOs desire access to the target state because it allows them to implement projects apt to secure further donor funding. Consequently, INGOs avoid programs that threaten regime survival because it could lead to the closure of their offices, and instead implement programs that the target state authorities approve (Bush 2015, 39). Hence, it is expected that the higher is the INGOs' pursuit of access to the country, the more they will implement ineffective regime-compatible or partly regime-compatible programs.

Another set of independent variables that are expected to have a negative impact on the effectiveness of democracy promotion are associated with donor interests: donors' poor control of their agents and their call for measurable outcomes. First, in line with the classical principle-agent problem, donors' poor observation and control of their agents (INGOs) generated by an extended delegation chain, provides some leeway to the INGOs (Bush 2015, 29). The INGOs use this opportunity to pursue their own interests in funding and access, which results in the implementation of measurable and regime-compatible programs that conflict with effective democracy assistance. Existing research on Belarus also supports the relevance of this variable. Poor donors monitoring and evaluation has previously led to the financing of fake projects and organizations controlled by the regime (Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010, 7). Therefore, the present study expects that under conditions of difficult observation and control, INGOs working with Belarus are prone to pursue more ineffective programs. Second, Bush argues that donor officials call for measurable outcomes due to the need to illustrate the effectiveness of democracy promotion to the domestic public for electoral reasons. This creates an incentive to which the INGOs have to respond; as a result, they implement measurable programs which are ineffective. (Bush 2015, 34 - 35) The idea of the INGO's responsiveness to the donors' call and subsequent implementation of measurable programs is also supported by Pikulik and Bedford (2018,17), who argue that

INGOs working on Belarus stick to the donors' requirement of reporting feasible and measurable outcomes. Accordingly, it is assumed that the donors' officials' higher pursuit of measurable outcomes due to the need to justify the results to the public will result in the INGO's higher implementation of measurable or partly measurable programs.

The final set of independent variables to consider is competition and professionalization. They occurred as a result of the broader changes in the democracy assistance field, such as involvement of a larger number of organizations and the transformation of higher education and public sector management (Bush 2015, 45,48). They entail losses for the effectiveness of democracy assistance by reinforcing the donors and the INGOs' interests in tame programs. In particular, competitive pressure taught the INGOs that it is appropriate to implement measurable programs and regime-compatible ones to ensure survival in terms of donor funding and access to the country (*Ibid.*, 46). Pikulik and Bedford argue that competition between implementers for funding in Belarus pushes them to report success to donors with measurable results (Pikulik, Bedford 2018, 17). Therefore, the research takes this factor as an independent variable with the expectation that the more the INGOs compete with each other, the more likely they will be to implement measurable and/or regime-compatible programs. Professionalization is negatively associated with effective democracy assistance as professionals were taught to value "*the technical and less politicized aspects of democracy promotion*" (Bush 2015, 47) and in general, prioritize organizational well-being, thus developing a preference for tame programs as appropriate to achieve this goal (Bush 2015, 47-48). Besides, professionalization has been identified as negatively affecting the introduction of innovative approaches in Belarus' democracy assistance (Pikulik, Bedford 2018, 13). Thus, it is expected that INGOs' professionalization will result in the implementation of more ineffective democracy assistance.

Finally, the research will control for two important variables as many scholars underline their decisive role; they are strategic interests of the donor state and the domestic context of the target state. The literature shows that donors states trying to promote their strategic interests avoid jeopardizing good relationships with authoritarian allies hence leading to a preference for regime-approved programs (Bush 2015; Zukowska 2016; Pikulik, Bedford 2018). For example, the EU's strategic relationships with Azerbaijan in the energy sector resulted in the lack of the EU's consistent response in terms of sanctions and isolation towards the human rights and the rule of law violations and thus compromising democracy promotion in Azerbaijan (Zukowska, 2016). Other studies have shown that the West's strategic interests in regional stability influenced

the design of democracy assistance and led to the implementation of a higher share of ineffective programs (Pikulik, Bedford 2018; Bush 2015). Therefore, the research will control for this crucial variable assuming that a higher strategic importance of Belarus' to the main donors, will result in more regime-compatible and partly regime-compatible programs. In addition, the domestic context of the target state is especially relevant given the repressiveness of domestic conditions in Belarus (Silitski, 2005; Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010). Scholars studying the effectiveness of EU democracy promotion argue that domestic conditions of the third countries that do not provide a certain degree of autonomy and accessibility for civil society negatively affect the building of democratic institutions and civic culture (Lavenex, Schimmelfennig 2011). Previous research on Belarus has found that the repressive domestic context prevented effective democracy assistance by making it illegal, leading to security threats to the actors involved, poor donor monitoring of their grantees and most importantly NGOs' inability to reach the broader society (Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010).

The summary of the independent variables and their expected effects are presented in Table 2

Table 2. The independent and control variables of the research

Name	Expected Effect
<u>Donors' interests</u> Independent Variable 1 – donors' observation and control	Under conditions of difficult observation and control, INGOs are prone to pursue measurable and / or regime-compatible, and thus ineffective democracy assistance
Independent Variable 2 – donors' pursuit of measurable outcomes	The more donors pursue measurable programs due to the need to justify the results to the public, the more the organizations working on Belarus will respond with measurable or both types of programs
<u>INGOs' survival interests</u> Independent Variable 3 – INGOs' pursuit of funding for survival	The higher the INGOs' concern for funding, the more measurable or both types of programs will be implemented
Independent Variable 4 – INGOs' pursuit of access to the country for survival	The higher is the INGOs' pursuit of access to the country, the more regime-compatible programs will be implemented
<u>Changes in the democracy establishment</u> Independent Variable 5 - competition	The more the INGOs compete for funding, the higher share of measurable, regime-compatible programs, or both programs
Independent Variable 6 - professionalization	The higher is the INGOs' professionalization, the more measurable, regime-compatible programs, or both will be pursued
<u>Control Variables</u>	The higher strategic importance of Belarus' to the

Control Variable 1 – donors’ state’s strategic interests	donors, the higher the share of regime-compatible or both types of programs
Control Variable 2 – Belarus’ domestic context	The more repressive the domestic context is, the higher share of regime-compatible or both types of programs

Source: author’s systematization

1.4. Data collection

Structured interviews were employed to construct the dataset of the activity of the INGOs in Belarusian democracy assistance. The interview method was the most appropriate one for the present study since only in this way the relevant information was to be obtained. The interviews are structured purposefully in order to measure the dependent and independent variables identified above.

The dependent variable of the research – effectiveness of democracy assistance conducted by INGOs requires knowledge of the relevant projects. This question is thus directly asked in the interview. Since the study is not limited to a particular period and investigates effectiveness in general it expects to receive the data about the main themes that INGOs have worked on. In addition, the research considers a temporal aspect to see if the share of tame projects decreased or increased over time and the reasons behind this. This data is gathered with the question if the type or content of INGO’s democracy assistance programs have changed over time, when and why that happened.

The interviews are structured to obtain information about the variables related to the INGOs' survival interests. The INGOs' concern for donor funding will be identified using the number of donors providing funds to an INGO. It is expected that a higher number of donors should reflect higher instability of the funding resulting in a higher level of concern. Therefore, the interview directly asks about the number of donors usually funding the INGOs. The data about the INGOs' interest in obtaining access for organizational survival is gathered using the indicator suggested by Bush, i.e. the location of a permanent office of the INGO. Organizations with a permanent office in an authoritarian state should be monitored more thoroughly by the regime, and due to the difficulty of their relocation, the INGOs should pursue access for organizational survival more (Bush 2015, 177-178). Therefore, INGOs are asked if their offices are located in Belarus.

Moreover, the questionnaire inquires about the independent variables related to the donors. Following Bush, measuring the degree of donors observation and control requires a set of indicators corresponding to four types of donors. The first type is the donor state government. It is suggested that INGO's are easier observed by its own government than by foreign governments, due to the domestic government's familiarity with the INGO's organizational structure. Thus, it is expected that the more the INGO is financed by foreign states, the less will be its observation and control (Bush 2015, 85-86). The data on this indicator will be found by investigating the donors' names and the origin of a particular INGO.

The second type of donor is a multilateral institution. According to Bush, a more homogeneous multilateral organization such as the EU should better monitor INGOs because it has a greater political consensus that allows for the collection of quality data on INGOs' activities than a relatively heterogeneous international organization such as the United Nations (UN), which has a diverse membership and as a result may face collective principles and may not be able to sanction INGOs for pursuing its interests (Bush 2015, 88). It is assumed that if the INGO's donor is the EU, its observation and control will be better. The indicator – the type of donors funding the INGO - the EU or other multilateral institutions will be used to reveal the membership diversity of a multilateral institution funding the INGO (*Ibid.*, 87-88) and will be asked indirectly through investigation of the donors' names.

The third type of the donor are governmental agencies to which the home state delegates funding. The governmental agency whose work is subject to political debate at home will need to justify their existence and show success to the public, and as a result they will better observe their grantees and prevent regime-compatible democracy assistance. However the need to show success to the public will also push them to endorse measurable programs. In contrast, the governmental agency whose work is non-controversial will be less prone to observe and control their grantees. (Bush 2105, 88-89) Therefore, it is expected that the higher number of politically vulnerable agencies fund the INGO, the better it will be overseen. However their observation and control will be not high and seen as middle since they will endorse measurable programs. To find out if the governmental agency is politically vulnerable or not, the indicator - donors' aid volatility will be used (*Ibid.*, 95). If the governmental agency's aid to the INGO is volatile, this will be interpreted to signify controversial domestic debates on foreign aid and thus the political vulnerability of this agency. To know the data about this indicator the questionnaire will ask the names of the donors whose funding strongly fluctuate from time to time. At the same time, to

investigate which of the INGO's donors is a governmental agency the interview will ask about the donors' names.

Private donors are the fourth type. Private donors should control the INGOs better due to a shorter delegation chain. In addition, private donors do not feel much state's strategic pressure and accountability to voters. As a result, they will not endorse measurable and regime-compatible programs that the INGOs implement for survival (Bush 2015, 185). Therefore, the research expects that the higher number of private donors the INGO possesses, the better it will be observed and controlled. What type of donor an organization has – is directly asked in the questionnaire.

Donors preferences for measurable outcomes, will be evaluated by the type of feedback the donors ask - quantitative (numbers, reports,), qualitative (the quality of impact, donors' physical presence during the implementation), or both. If the donors' largely ask for quantitative feedback, the higher their preference for measurable outcomes will be. (Bush 2015, 175) The data for this indicator will be gathered in two steps, first, the interviewees are asked if an INGO measures the impact with quantitative and qualitative indicators, and, second what type of indicators their donors prefer most.

To find out about the INGO's level of competition, the indicator of the difficulty of obtaining funding is applied. It is assumed that the more difficult it is for an organization to get funding, the more competitive the field should be. Therefore, the interview asks how the organization assesses the difficulty of getting funding on a scale from 1 to 5. Professionalization is studied with the number of staff who has a graduate degree in international development or a related field, or who has previous work experience in another organization of the democracy establishment, the higher number of professionals in the INGO, the more the INGO is professionalized (Bush 2015, 117).

The data about control variables will be collected using primary and secondary sources. The strategic importance of Belarus will be analyzed through the amount of foreign assistance (military and economic aid) sent to Belarus by the US and the EU. Considering that the EU lacks security partnerships in the neighborhood and mainly concentrates on the socioeconomic development of its neighbors (Gressel, Popescu 2020), the strategic importance of Belarus to the EU will be measured only with economic aid. It is expected that the more military and economic aid these donors will send to Belarus, the higher its strategic importance will be. Belarus'

domestic context is measured with the Freedom House democracy score assuming that the lower Belarus' democracy' score is, the more repressive the domestic context will be.

1.4.1. Selection of the participants, conduct of interviews

The search of the participants for the study was undertaken in several steps. First, a list of the INGOs involved in democracy assistance was created based on Sarah Bush's list of 150 INGOs working on democracy assistance (Bush 2015, 242), and the author's knowledge. It included around 160 INGOs. Second, the INGOs explicitly involved in democracy assistance in Belarus were identified through studying the websites of the 160 INGOs. The total number of organizations working on Belarus is 52. Third, an invitation to participate in the study was sent out to those organizations. Fourth, in the course of the correspondence, a sample of the INGOs was identified on three parameters: 1) the organization should be a foreign NGO, 2) carried out at least some activity concerning designing and/or implementing democracy assistance projects in Belarus, 3) be currently involved in democracy assistance in Belarus or planning to take part in some activity. Besides, attention was paid to the inclusion of INGOs with diverse types of democracy assistance programs to cover the majority of projects undertaken. Therefore, the recruitment of the participants represented purposive sampling.

From the total number of the invited INGOs, 17 organizations were excluded from the study as they did not match the participation criteria. Hence, around 35 INGOs are currently working on democracy promotion in Belarus (see Appendix 2). However, from the final number, 25 organizations did not take part in the study: 14 of them did not reply to the invitation, whereas 12 were not able to take part for several reasons, including security matters, high volume of requests, and the loss of the contact during communication. Finally, nine organizations took part in the research. In general, it should be noticed that it was pretty complicated to connect with the INGOs, which could be explained by the trust issue taking into account the danger of their work in the highly authoritarian regime.

The interviews with nine participating organizations were conducted from the end of April until the middle of July 2021 under guarantees of confidentiality. The names of the organizations and of the participants can not be disclosed in the present research due to security reasons. European and US INGOs took part in the research. Both types of INGOs focus on civil society, local governance, media, and the rule of law development in Belarus. In terms of their difference, the US organizations concentrate mainly on support for business, and youth whereas the European

organizations are involved in human rights, political parties, and trade union advancement.

Interviews were conducted via Zoom with seven organizations, while two organizations responded in writing. The Zoom interviews on average lasted 35-45 minutes. A small sample of participating organizations does not involve all characteristics of the entire group of organizations. In particular, it lacks organizations engaged in six themes of democracy assistance: 1) conflict resolution; 2) constitutions; 3) dissidents; 4) good governance; 5) humanitarian assistance; 6) legislative assistance. Thus, due to the small number of participants, the data cannot be generalized to the entire group of organizations. The data obtained is considered reliable, given that the anonymity of the participants was guaranteed.

1.5. Construction of the dataset

The data set was constructed in two steps; first, the data relevant for the dependent variable was gathered and coded; secondly – the six independent variables were analyzed and coded. First, projects were classified as tame/not-tame. Next the share of effective and ineffective programs managed by each INGO is calculated. The democracy assistance projects are codified following Bush's classification in two regards - in terms of the theme it belongs to and second, in regard, to the type of democracy assistance it represents. Therefore, the leading projects implemented by the INGO will be analyzed using Bush's full description of the projects (see Appendix 1.) to identify what themes they represent, e.g., local governance, human rights. After this, each theme on which the INGO has worked will be coded with the capital letter of one of the four types of programs of democracy assistance it may belong to (Ibid., 93): 1) non-regime compatible (NRC), 2) measurable (M), 3) regime-compatible (RC), 4) measurable and regime-compatible (M/RC). Second, to find the share of each type of program conducted by the INGO, the themes belonging to each particular type (NRC, M, RC, and M/RG) are summed up and then divided on the total number of themes the INGO worked on and then turned into a percentage.

The interviewees' responses will be coded so as to be able to identify each independent variable. If the indicator of the INGO's pursuit of funding – shows that one-two donors have usually funded the INGO, the answer will be coded as low INGO's interest in funding. If it shows that the number of donors has been three – the INGO's interests in funding will be considered middle. In the case of the INGO's funding by four and more donors - the INGO's interests will be coded as high. When the indicator of the INGO's interest in getting access to Belarus – the location of the permanent office demonstrates that the INGO has, or used to have a permanent office in

Belarus, the INGO's interest in access will be considered high. By contrast, the absence of the office will be classified as the INGO's low interest in getting access.

For the data about the donors' observation and control, dichotomous indicators will be applied, where one – will signal high control whereas zero – low control. If the INGO's national origin is different from the governmental donors' origin, it will get 0 for each such donor, in case its own government funds the INGO it will get one 1. Further, if the EU funds the INGO it will get 1, if it is funded by other multilateral institutions such as UN and OECD it will get 0 for each such donor. If the funding from governmental agencies strongly fluctuates, the governmental agency will be considered politically scrutinized and get 1 for aid volatility. However, in addition to a 1, it will get a 0 because although it will have more control over the organization, it will approve measurable programs to justify the results to the public. Thus, these two indicators would reflect the agency's middle level of control. If the funding of the governmental agency does not fluctuate much, it will be codified as a politically secure agency and get 0. Lastly, if private donor funds the INGO, it will get 1 for each such donor. The number of ones and zeros collected by each INGO will be counted. If the total number of ones exceeds zeros, then the observation and control for the INGO will be classified as high; if zeros prevail – low, an equal amount of ones and zeros will be classified as the middle level of the INGO's observation and control. If donors prefer quantitative feedback, the donors' pursuit for measurable outcomes will be coded as high. In case the majority of the INGO's donors call for both types of feedback – the donors' officials call for measurable outcomes will be classified as middle, and if they call for qualitative evaluation, the donor's call for tangible results will be classified as low.

Third, the independent variables, competition, and professionalization, will be coded as follows. Competition will be classified as low if an INGO's difficulty of getting donors' funding on a scale from 1 to 5 ranges between 1-1.6, middle – between 1.7 – 3.3 points, and high from 3,4 to 5 points. In turn, an INGO's professionalization will be considered low if less than 30% of an INGO's employees are professionals, middle – if the INGO has from 30% to 50% professional employees, and high – in case of 50% and a higher percentage of the INGO's employees are professional.

1.6. Data analysis

Initially, the data will be analyzed to answer the first research question - how effectively have the international non-governmental organizations in Belarus carried out democracy assistance. The

overall democratizing impact of the INGOs in Belarus will be measured in two steps. First, the average percentage of effective programs (not regime-compatible) for all organizations will be calculated. Second, the average percentage of each group of ineffective programs (measurable, regime-compatible, and both types) for all organizations will be counted. Afterward, the averages of each group will be summed up to find out the total percentage of ineffective programs. If the average percentage of the effective programs significantly exceeds the ineffective ones, then democracy assistance will be counted as effective. If the opposite is true, then ineffective. On the other hand, if the average percentages of effective and ineffective programs are equal, then the effectiveness will be counted as middle. In addition, the same technique will be utilized to study if the share of ineffective programs changed over time. For this, the share of effective and ineffective programs implemented by a particular INGO will be compared with the share of the programs implemented in response to the specific change, which the INGOs will determine by themselves.

Further, a set of correlation analyses will be employed. First, to know whether, with the growth of the value of a certain independent variable, the share of the relevant ineffective program increases the percentages of the relevant ineffective program of all organizations with a low level of value of a particular independent variable will be added up and divided by the number of such organizations. The same will be done for all organizations with medium and high levels of value of the same independent variable. Then, it will be analyzed if the average share of the ineffective program of the INGOs with a low, middle, and high level of value of the separate independent variable raised with the growth of the value of this independent variable. Second, it is important to understand which of these factors exerted the most influence on the share of ineffective programs. the research will build three logistic regression models for each group of ineffective programs – dependent variables and the relevant independent and control variables that showed a positive correlation with them. Each dependent variable will be considered binary and assigned 0 if the INGO does not implement the ineffective program and 1 in case it does. Given the distinct nature of the control variables, only the strategic importance of Belarus will be analyzed by observing the extent of US and EU presence among other donors in a particular organization and the likelihood of that organization implementing regime-compatible programs. Belarus' domestic context will be excluded from the analysis due to the inability to interpret the data for the organizations. Although the logistic regression analysis does not provide reliable results due to a low number of observations, it gives an illustrative-qualitative account of the extent of influence of each independent variable, which can be built on during further research.

2. DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE IN BELARUS IN DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

2.1. Domestic conditions

Right after the establishment of independence in 1991, there were prospects for democratic development in Belarus. The country experienced a fair degree of political openness (Silitski 2005, 86), and international donors intensively supported the building of democratic institutions (Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010, 2-3). However, following Alexander Lukashenko's election as the president of Belarus in 1994, the exercise of democracy in the country became subject to restrictions (Silitski 2005, 85-86). As a reaction to his diminishing popularity in 1995, the president started to appoint the members of the fundamental democratic institutions such as local governments, Constitutional Court, and Central Election Commission and thus abolished their independence (*Ibid.*, 86-87). Besides, he took away the decision-making power from the Parliament by issuing Presidential decrees (*Ibid.*, 87-89). Also, the activity of international democracy promoters was persecuted. Their offices were closed down (Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010, 4-5) often on the grounds of the violation of financial procedures, e.g., the Belarus Soros Foundation and the United States-based City of Hope (The Jamestown Foundation, 1997) while they were not allowed to enter the country or were detained. Moreover, the registration of foreign aid with authorities became compulsory after the 2001 presidential elections, which made it harder to challenge the regime (Jarabik 2006, 87-88).

Alexander Lukashenko applied other tactics to sustain his rule as well. The main characteristics of the subsequent electoral cycles in Belarus were widespread state propaganda, detentions (sometimes disappearances) of the main political opponents, electoral fraud, and suppression of peaceful demonstrators with the use of specially trained security forces (Silitski, 2005). In addition, to ensure the support of the core electorate dependent on economic stability, the regime regularly appealed to Russia for financial support in the form of loans and low oil and gas prices (Nechiparenka, 2011).

Regardless of harsh domestic conditions, pro-democratic forces in Belarus have undertaken several attempts to challenge the regime. During the 2001 and 2006 presidential elections (Pikulik 2018, 10), non-violent protests were organized; however, in both cases, the opposition candidates failed to collect substantial votes, and the people's mobilization was not massive (*Ibid.*, 7- 8). The third attempt in 2010 ended up in a harsh crackdown where seven presidential candidates were arrested on election day, and more than seven hundred activists imprisoned (*Ibid.*, 9).

The brightest political opening in the country occurred after Ukraine's Maidan in 2014. Afraid of repetition of the bloody scenario, donors reoriented their activity towards supporting development and stability rather than democracy in Belarus (*Ibid.*,9). During this time, the regime took a position as a peacekeeper in the region, arranging the negotiations that produced the two "Minsk Agreements" and made some openings for the promotion of the Belarusian language and identity (e.g., grass-roots campaigning by NGOs promoting the Belarusian language were more tolerated) (Kryvoi, Wilson 2015, 5). In addition, some steps towards improving the human rights situation in Belarus were taken by adopting the National Human Rights Action Plan in October 2016 that facilitated legislative and domestic reforms regarding human rights and fundamental values (European Commission).

However, the conditions for democratic development in Belarus dramatically worsened after the 2020 presidential elections, resulting in an unprecedented popular mobilization and subsequent political repression. The disputed official election results with 80,1% of votes for Lukashenko and only 10,1% for the opposition leader, sparked massive protests, with more than 500 thousand people turning to the streets (RFI, 2021). Consequently, the regime responded with large-scale persecution involving politically motivated arrests of 33,000 people during 2020 (Libereco, 2021), branding of 18 opposition leaders as terrorists, including Svetlana Tichanovskay - the leader of the Belarus opposition (KGB, 747-764), and liquidation of more than 46 civil society organizations by August 2021 (Amnesty International, 2021). Such domestic conditions should significantly restrict democracy assistance in Belarus and influence its design².

²Belarus has been a stable authoritarian regime as its freedom score revolved around 6 and 6,5 since 1992 until 2016 (Free: 1-2.5, partly free: 3-5.5, not free: 5.5.) (Freedom in the World (the annual surveys).

2.2. Democracy assistance in an international context

The main donors promoting democracy in Belarus have been the United States and the EU. Although they pursued a common goal, they have applied different mechanisms to deliver democracy aid to Belarus. Thus, the US directly financed non-governmental organizations (Jarabic 2006, 86-87) whereas the European Union (since 1998) (*Ibid.*, 90-91) channelled the aid via its financial mechanisms such as TACIS, EIDHR, and the Decentralized Cooperation Budget Line (DC) directed at consulting companies (*Ibid.*, 86 – 87). When Belarus became an EU neighbouring country after the 2004's enlargement, the EU member states, along with other European countries, increased their assistance (Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010, 5), some of them supported democratization in Belarus by funding their own NGOs, such as Slovakia, Sweden, and Poland (Jarabic 2006, 91).

With the consolidation of the authoritarian rule after the 1996 fraudulent referendum, both the US and the EU experienced strained relationships with Belarus. As a result, in 1997, the US decreased its foreign assistance from almost 70 million dollars to about 20 million dollars annually. In addition, it suspended several initiatives such as the Overseas Private Investment Corporation agreement of 1992 and security-related assistance, including under the CTR Program (1997). The EU, in turn, did not conclude a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) (1997) and suspended technical assistance programs (US Department of State, 11/03). Since then, international democracy assistance has undergone some changes, and the democratic West took democracy promotion in Belarus more seriously. The US government started to directly channel most of its assistance to the Belarusian non-governmental sector ("selective engagement" policy). After the 2004 parliamentary elections in Belarus, the US adopted "The Belarus Democracy Act" (October 2004), which authorized the assistance for the development of civil society and independent media, political parties, human rights and the rule of law, and international exchanges (US Department of State, 11/03). The EU turned to more flexible mechanisms of democracy promotion than TACIS, such as the DC budget line () and the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)(Jarabic 2006, 90-91), and made cooperation with the regime conditional on democratic development (EC 2006's non-paper) (Jarabic 2010, 3).

However, since 2015, both donors were more interested in stability in Belarus than democracy promotion fearing a repetition of the bloody Ukraine-Russian crisis. As a result, they severely cut the funding for pro-democratic forces for the 2015 presidential elections (thirty times lower than in 2010) (Pikulik 2018, 9). In addition, the EU established the policy of cooperation with the regime and lifted previous sanctions introduced in 2011 toward 199 persons and 19 companies (*Ibid.*, 11). During the period of cooperation, among other things, the EU was engaged in strengthening the Belarusian economy, focusing on the private (EU4 Business project) and financial sectors development, governance improvement through the promotion of democratic governance (EU-Belarus Human Rights Dialogue) and the regime's cooperation with the EU (EU-Belarus Coordination Group), social development by supporting mobility exchanges among youth as well as launching negotiations on Visa Facilitation (European Commission).

After the 2020 presidential elections, cooperation with Belarus was suspended, and sanctions introduced again, bearing more severe implications for the Belarusian government than ever. Responding to the massive political repressions, the EU and the US imposed sanctions against individuals involved in human rights violations and entities, helping to sustain the regime financially: the US targeted 40 individuals and four entities (Pompeo, 2020) and later on, 23 individuals and 21 entities, including the Belarus security services and state-owned properties - Belaruskali OAO, Grodno Tobacco Factory Neman (US Department of Treasury, 2021) whereas the EU during 2020 – 2021 sanctioned 183 individuals and 26 entities (European Council, 2021). Moreover, for the first time, Belarus experienced international isolation in other sectors: it was excluded from participation in the Eurovision song contest (Eurovision, 2021) and conducting the Ice Hockey championship in 2021 (Steiss, 2021). In addition, air traffic with the country has been suspended as a result of the capture by Lukashenko of a Ryanair plane to detain the opposition journalist Protasevich (Diaz, 2021).

In response to the sanctions, the Belarusian regime introduced a policy of retaliation. It suspended its participation in the EU's Eastern Partnership (Belarus suspends... 2021), in which it has taken part since 2009 and organized deliberate illegal migration on the Polish, Lithuanian and Latvian borders by facilitating the transit of migrants from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria toward the EU. At the time of writing, the EU is considering further sanctions against persons and legal entities and suspension of the Visa Facilitation Agreement for officials linked to the regime (European Council, 2021).

Overall, the US has been much more interested in promoting democracy than its strategic interests in Belarus. For 2000-2019, US democracy aid sent to Belarus sixteen times exceeded the US economic and military aid combined (see Figure 1) (US Department of State, Foreign Operations Assistance: Belarus). In turn, the US Government-funded security-related assistance was not available for Belarus due to its poor record on human rights. As a result, it received some little assistance on a case-by-case basis (on average \$430 thousand per year). (US Department of State, 11/03)

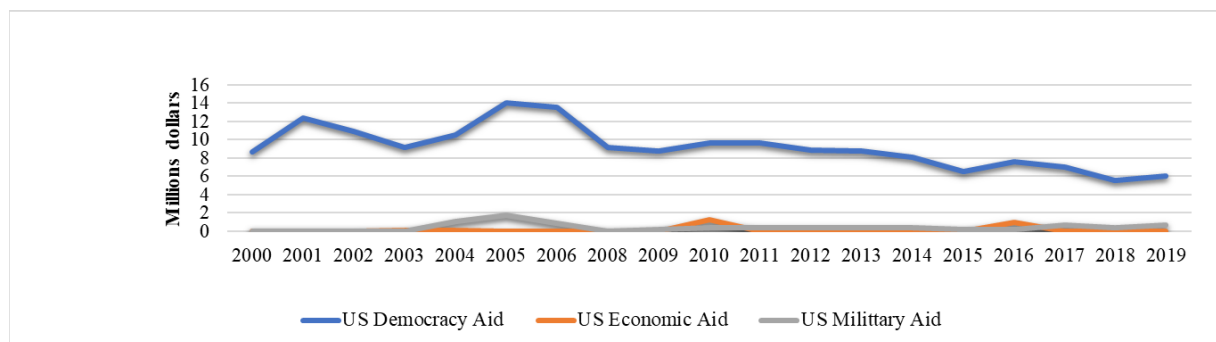


Figure 1. US Foreign Assistance to Belarus

Source: author's calculations based on the data from the annual reports of the US Foreign Operations Assistance

Comparing the US foreign aid sent to Belarus with aid received by Azerbaijan - a country with a similar freedom level (Freedom House 2021), Belarus's strategic importance for the US appears negligible. Although the US channeled almost the same amount of democracy aid to both countries for the 2000-2019 period, Azerbaijan obtained a tremendously higher amount of US economic aid (\$102 million versus \$2.5 million for Belarus) and military aid (about \$234 million versus \$8 million for Belarus) (see Figure 2) (US Department of State, Foreign Operations Assistance: Azerbaijan; Belarus). It means that strategically Azerbaijan has been much more important to the US than Belarus. Thus, it is expected that the US should conduct in Belarus more confrontational programs than regime-compatible ones.

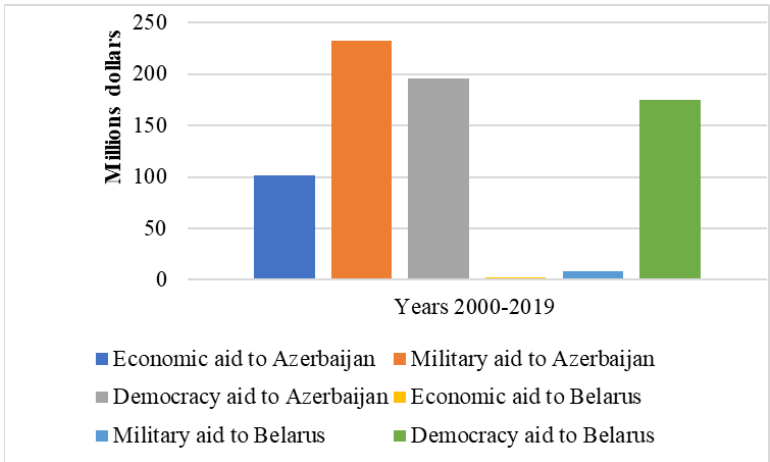


Figure 2. US Foreign Assistance (Azerbaijan vs Belarus)

Source: author's calculations based on the data from the annual reports of the US Foreign Operations Assistance

In contrast to the US, the EU sent a higher amount of democracy aid to Belarus. The data available comes from 2007. For the 2007-2019 period, the EU invested twice as much in Belarus' democratization - 209 million euros (European Commission, EU Aid Explorer) than the US - 96 million dollars (US Department of State, Foreign Operations Assistance: Belarus). However, strategically Belarus has also been more valuable for the EU than for the US. During 2007-2019, the EU has given 13 times more economic aid to Belarus (27 million euros) (European Commission, EU Aid Explorer) than the US (2 million dollars) (US Department of State, Foreign Operations Assistance: Belarus). In addition, for the whole period except for the year 2019 when the economic aid drastically increased as a result of the 75 million euros loan from the European Investment Bank, there has been no large gap between the EU democracy and economic aid as was the case for the US, democracy aid only twice exceeded economic assistance. Lastly, there are two observable periods in EU-Belarus relations with decreasing of democracy aid and increasing of economic aid (2008-2010 and 2015-2019) - something absent in the US-Belarus relations, which demonstrate Belarus's higher strategic importance for the EU than for the US (see Figure 3).(European Commission, EU Aid Explorer)

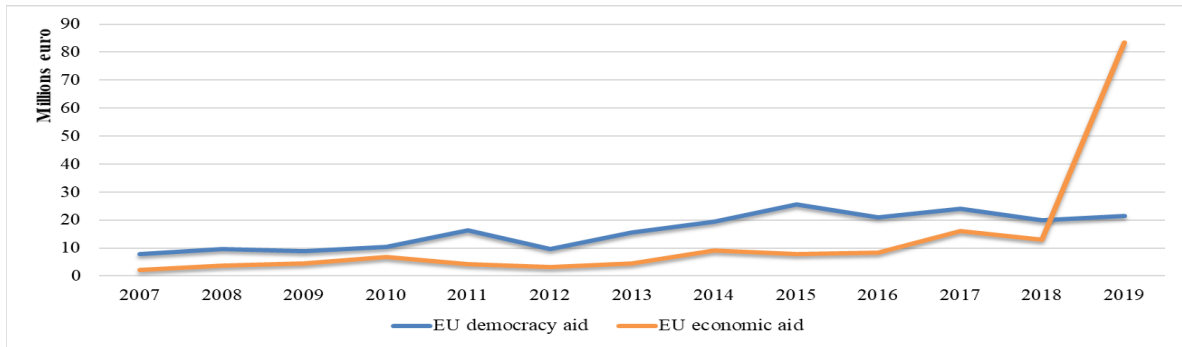


Figure 3. EU Developmental Assistance to Belarus

Source: author's calculations based on the data from the EU Aid Explorer

Notes:

1. Economic aid comprises eight categories: 1) general budget support (directed towards macroeconomic reforms); 2) banking and financial services; 3) business and other services; 4) industry, mineral resources and mining; 5) trade policies and tourism; 6) agriculture, forestry and fishing; 7) energy; 8) energy generation and supply).

2. Democracy aid relates to government and civil society sector category.

Nevertheless, overall, the EU prioritized democracy promotion in Belarus over strategic interests for at least two reasons. On the one hand, for the 2007-2019 period, its democracy aid exceeded the economic one except in 2019. Besides, during the same period, the EU granted twice as much democracy aid to Belarus (around 209 million euros) than to Azerbaijan (around 104 million euros), whereas their economic aid was almost the same (about 167 million euros) (see Figure 4) (European Commission, EU Aid Explorer).

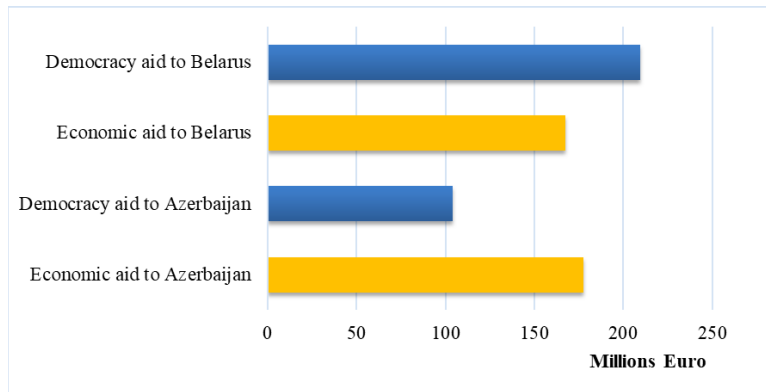


Figure 4. EU Developmental Assistance (Belarus vs Azerbaijan 2007-2019)

Source: author's calculations based on the data from the EU Aid Explorer.

Therefore, the EU would be expected to conduct more regime-compatible programs in Belarus than the US due to its greater strategic importance. However, the share of regime-compatible EU programs should not exceed the share of confrontational programs due to the low interest of the EU in preserving the regime.

3. EFFECTIVENESS OF DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE IN BELARUS

3.1. Dataset

The data set on Belarusian democracy assistance includes, first, the names of organizations encrypted by number - and the approximate year of the start of their work on Belarus (see Table 3). Second, Table 3 illustrates the value of each of the six independent variables on a scale from low to high for a particular INGO. Third, the table provides the values for the dependent variable, in particular: a) the main themes (programs) on which the INGOs were working in Belarus; b) the share of each type of programs (NRC, M, RC, and M/RC) for each INGO. In most cases, the percentage represents the sum of the themes belonging to each particular type (NRC, M, RC, and M/RC) divided on the total number of themes the INGO worked on. If the INGO worked on only one topic, that share amounts to 100%. Therefore, a higher percentage does not necessarily reflect a higher number of programs; c) the average percentage of each type of program calculated for all organizations; d) the total percentage of effective and ineffective programs.

Table 3. Dataset of the variables related to the INGOs' activity in Belarus (measuring unit – high, middle, low; percentage)

Independent variables	INGOs' survival interests		Donor interests		Changes in the democracy assistance field		Dependent Variable					
	Organization (title, year of work on Belarus)	funding	access	observation and control	preference for measurable outcomes	professionalization	competition	Projects	Effectiveness of democracy assistance (percentage%)			
									NR/C	M	RC	M/RC
Organization 1 (1990)	Low	High	High	Mid	Mid	Low	Unions, Local Governance	50%	0%	0%	50%	
Organization 2 (2005)	Mid	Low	Low	Mid	High	-	Civil Society, Media, Women's groups, Research, Youth	40%	20%	20%	20%	
Organization 3 (1996)	Mid	High	Low	Low	High	Mid	Youth ³ , Business, Civic Education	66%	0%	17%	17%	
Organization 4 (2000)	Low	Low	High	Mid	High	Low	Political Parties	100%	0%	0%	0%	
Organization 5 (2005)	High	High	Low	High	High	High	Media, Rule of Law, Research	33%	33%	33%	0%	
Organization 6 (2001)	High	High	Low	Mid	High	High	Civil Society, Media, Local Governance,	25%	25%	25%	25%	
Organization 7 (1994)	Low	Low	High	Mid	High	High	Business, Civil Society, Local Governance, Rule of Law, Civic Education;	0%	0%	60%	40%	
Organization 8 (1998)	Mid	Low	Mid	-	High	-	Elections	0%	100%	0%	0%	
Organization 9 (1999)	High	Low	Mid	Mid	High	Mid	Human Rights	0%	100%	0%	0%	
Share of the programs for each type of democracy assistance (average)								35%	31%	17%	17%	
Effectiveness in total								Effective programs (N/RC)	Ineffective programs (M, RC, M/RC)			
								35%	65%			

³For this organization it was possible to count the number of programs dedicated to a particular theme (e.g., youth), so the percentage reflects this calculations.

3.2. Effectiveness of democracy assistance by INGOs in Belarus

INGOs working on Belarus implemented a greater share of ineffective democracy assistance programmes – 65%. Implementation of measurable programs was the most popular among ineffective democracy assistance programs – 31% and consisted of projects such as:

1. media development - capacity building of journalists, safety training, and legal support;
2. human rights – different kinds of support to human rights defenders, human rights education;
3. elections - election observation mission and electoral training program.

Regime-compatible and both types of programs (measurable and regime-compatible) were promoted in equal share – 17%. Regime-compatible programs included:

1. civil society projects - capacity building of NGOs (establishment of institutions, fiscal literacy, communication with citizens, network-building), support for grass-roots (e.g., local area improvement and national identity projects) and local initiatives;
2. civic education – workshops for Belarusian higher education officials on topics such as internationalization, promotion of US values among Belarusian professionals (entrepreneurs, local government officials, legal professionals, non-governmental organization leaders);
3. the rule of law - advocacy for improved media laws and training for legal professionals.

Among the programs related to both types of democracy assistance, common topics were:

1. Local governance - communication between civil society organizations and local authorities (social inclusion), promotion of administrative reform on decentralization of decision-making at the local level, and planning of local budget, practical training for local government officials;
2. Women's groups - leadership courses for women;
3. Business – developing entrepreneurship among Belarusian professionals and practical training for business delegations.

Meanwhile, confrontational approaches or effective democracy assistance made up 35% of total democracy assistance. The common themes included:

1. the development of trade unions - including workers solidarity;
2. research – including strengthening the visibility of independent research, support for think-tanks, network-building among Belarusian analytical centers, research into violations of media freedom;

3. youth – support for youth-oriented initiatives and promotion of democratic values among youth through education in US universities;
4. political parties – strengthening and professionalization of Belarusian political parties.

The analysis of the effectiveness of democracy assistance according to Bush's typology, is limited because it does not take into account the projects' performance whose careful study may demonstrate that the programs considered effective may turn out to be ineffective. For example, there is some evidence that the confrontational program - political parties, cannot really be considered effective because international donors supported several parties that were under the tight control of the regime (Lavnickiewicz, 2017). Thus, there is the need for a more in-depth analysis of the activity carried out by the INGOs so that it is possible to place the projects they worked on into the correct type and present a more detailed picture of the effectiveness of democracy assistance in Belarus.

3.2.1. Temporal fluctuations in the type of democracy assistance in Belarus

Only few organizations made adjustments in their program portfolio over time, and others only changed tactics. Contrary to the assumption that the more harsh domestic context leads to a higher share of the regime-compatible programs, the data showed that the share of ineffective democracy assistance in Belarus increased when the domestic political context became more favorable. According to one INGO who mainly concentrated on the development of trade unions, when cooperation with the regime was possible it in addition worked on local-governance themes - a program which is both measurable and regime-compatible: "*In the past, we worked to some extent on the local self-governance, on communication between civil society organizations and local authorities....Now the authorities are not ready to engage in this dialogue, automatically our focus shifts to other topics...*" (Organization 1, 26.04.2021). On the other hand, according to another organization, during good bilateral relationships, democracy assistance programs changed, in particular funding for programs increased: "*The reasons projects changed: bilateral relations, donors' preferences changed. The stronger those bilateral relations are, the more money that donors will have*" (Interview Transcript, Organization 2, 22.04.2021). However, when comparing the themes on which this organization worked during the period of confrontation with those implemented during cooperation years, it can be concluded that since 2016 the INGO implemented more ineffective democracy assistance as it started to conduct more regime-compatible programs by replacing a measurable program with both types of women

groups (measurable and regime-compatible) (Interview Transcript, Organization 2, 22.04.2021). Thus, Western cooperation with the regime brought higher funding but not better programs.

3.3. Factors that impede effectiveness of democracy assistance in Belarus

A correlation analysis is performed on the dataset, according to the procedure described in section 1.6, to identify relationships between independent and dependent variables (see Table 4). All the independent variables have the expected sign, with one exception.

INGO's survival interests in getting donors' funding and access to Belarus are positively associated with ineffective democracy assistance. In particular, the data demonstrates that the growth in the level of INGOs pursuit of donors' funding leads to the implementation of a higher share of measurable programs (low – 0%, middle – 40%, and high – 53%) (see Table 4). Moreover, it can be seen that the INGOs' concern about donors' funding is quite strong in Belarus since a reasonably significant percentage of organizations worried to a high degree (37,5%) as well as to a middle one (37,5%). At the same time, the INGOs' higher pursuit of access to the country is associated with a higher portion of regime-compatible democracy assistance (5% more regime-compatible programs and 8% more partly regime-compatible both types of programs) (see Table 4). However, according to the interviews, none of the organizations had an office in Belarus for an extended period of time, meaning that the pursuit of access by INGOs should, to a lesser extent, influence the implementation of the share of regime-compatible democracy assistance.

Only one of the two factors related to the donors' interests showed positive relations with ineffective democracy assistance. The data did not show the expected tendency that poor donor observation and control of INGOs results in a higher share of ineffective programs (the INGOs with a high control implemented 20% more regime-compatible programs and a 30% more of both types than those having middle donor control). On the other hand, the growth of donors' call for measurable outcomes was associated with a higher share of measurable programs implemented by INGOs (0%-24%-33,5%) but did not show a positive correlation with partly measurable both types of programs (see Table 4). In addition, the majority of INGOs working on Belarus (75%) had been exposed to the donors' call for both - quantitative and qualitative indicators⁴. The importance of both categories of indicators for donors' officials also can be

⁴One organization is excluded from the analysis due to the lack of data

traced in some contradictory tendencies mentioned by the interviewees: *"We used to use a lot of more qualitative, but nowadays the Ministry is requesting more quantitative indicators. So, we are moving towards quantitative indicators. Right now, it is a mix"* (Organization 1, 26.04.2021), whereas another one pointed to an increasing understanding that quantitative indicators do not clearly illustrate the impact of democracy assistance projects while answering the question of what type of feedback donors ask: *"Both – though there is an increasing understanding that quantitative indicators, particularly in cases like Belarus, do not adequately reflect impact"* (Organization 6, 21.04.2021).

Two independent variables – competition and professionalization, were expected to correlate positively with measurable, regime-compatible, or both types of programs. These expectations were confirmed. In particular, higher competition was associated with a higher share of regime-compatible programs (the INGOs with a middle value implemented an 8,5% higher portion and those with a high one 30,5% more) (see Table 4). Besides, intense competition is experienced by almost half of the INGOs (42%)⁵. One of the organizations explains: *"The organizations... are fearlessly competitive among themselves. They are forced to work with each other on certain kinds of programming, but they do not like to share the information or any more information they are legally required to... the reality is just very different because people are worried about where the next set of funding is coming from and who is going to get it"*. (Interview Transcript, Organization 3, 06.05.2021). In addition, more professionalized INGOs were associated with a higher share of measurable (a 35% increase from middle to high levels) and regime-compatible programs (with a 19% increase) (see Table 4). Almost all INGOs working on democracy assistance in Belarus are highly professionalized, predominantly having an extensive experience rather than degrees. One of the participants described the level of professionalization of his INGO in this way: *"None of them have a degree in international development... What they have is an experience....we collectively have around 75 years of experience in this field, on average 15 years for each, but none has been trained to do that"* (Interview Transcript, Organization 2, 21.04.2021).

⁵2 organizations were excluded from the analysis due to the lack of precise data

Table 4. Correlation analysis. Relationships between independent variables and dependent one – effectiveness of democracy assistance (measuring unit: shifts from low to middle to high levels; percentage%)

Independent variables		The level of value of an independent variable	Dependent variables		
			measurable (M) (%)	regime-compatible (RC) (%)	both type (measurable and regime compatible) (M/RC) (%)
INGOs' survival interests	(1) donor's funding	Low	0	-	30
		Mid	40		12
		High	53(positive)		8 (negative)
	(2) access to Belarus	Low	-	16	15
High		19 (positive)		23 (positive)	
Donor interests	(3) observation and control	Low	14,5	15	23
		Mid	100	0	0
		High	50	20	30
	(4) preference for measurable outcomes	Low	0	-	17
		Mid	24		22
		High	33,5 (positive)		0
Changes in the democracy assistance field	(5) competition	Low	0	0	25
		Mid	50	8,5	8,5
		High	19	39 (positive)	22
	(6) professionalization (from middle to high)	Mid	0	0	50
		High	35 (positive)	19 (positive)	13 (negative)

Source: author's calculations

3.3.1 Identifying the influence of the independent variables

The regression analysis (described in the section 1.6.)⁶ revealed interesting variations in the impact of the independent and control variables (see Table 5). First, INGOs' survival interests significantly move the implementation of ineffective programs in Belarusian democracy assistance. The INGOs' pursuit of donors' funding for survival plays the most significant role in implementing the measurable programs (0,41). In turn, the INGOs' interest in getting access to the country for survival, although it showed a positive correlation with two types of regime-compatible democracy assistance, influences only one - both types of programs (0,17). The data demonstrates that the INGOs working on Belarus have been more concerned about getting donors' funding than access to the country. Second, the impact of donors' interest in measurable outcomes on executing the measurable programs is negligible (0,02). Third, among the factors relating to the changes in the democracy assistance field, only INGOs' competition had a weighty influence (0,20), in particular on the implementation of the regime compatible programs in Belarus, whereas the impact of INGOs' professionalization on the enactment of regime-compatible programs was absent and on the measurable programs - negligible (0,01). Fourth, US strategic interests are the most accountable factor for implementing the regime-compatible democracy assistance in Belarus. This is one of the two factors whose impact was evident in two

⁶The precision of regression is good only for Model 2 (1), not very good for Model 3 (0,5), and not good for Model 1 (about 0) (see Table 4).

types of regime-compatible democracy assistance with the highest score - 0,31 – regime-compatible programs effect, 0,33 - both types of programs (partially compatible with the regime). In turn, the EU strategic attitude is another most influential factor responsible for implementation of the regime-compatible democracy assistance in Belarus. Similar to the US, its impact was found in two types of regime-compatible democracy assistance; however, its scores have been a bit lower. The EU exerts the lowest influence on implementing regime-compatible programs in Belarus (0,11) following competition and the US's strategic interest. Also, it is the second factor after the US that influences the performance of both types of programs (0,22), followed by INGOs' need for access to Belarus. However, this data contradicts chapter 2, arguing that the strategic importance of Belarus for the EU to be higher than for the United States. Given the insufficient accuracy of regression models, it was decided to rely on data from primary and secondary sources and consider EU influence on the implementation of the regime-compatible programs higher than those of the US.

Table 5. Logistic regression analysis

Independent variables		Dependent variable – Effectiveness of democracy assistance		
		Model 1 Measurable programs	Model 2 Regime-compatible programs	Model 3 Both types of programs
INGOs' survival interests	(1)donor's funding	0,41	-	0,12*
	(2)access to Belarus	0	0,00	0,17
Donor officials' interests	(3)observation and control	0,28*	0,33*	0,02*
	(4)preferences for measurable outcomes	0,02	-	0,03*
Changes in the democracy assistance field	(5)competition	0,24*	0,20	0,01*
	(6)professionalization	0,01	0,00	0,04*
Control variables	(7.1)US' strategic interests in Belarus	-	0,31	0,33
	(7.2) EU strategic interests in Belarus	-	0,11	0,22

F1	0,5	1	about 0
----	-----	---	---------

Source: author's calculations based on the logistic regression analysis

Notes: * - variables that had a zero or negative correlation

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Largely ineffective democracy assistance in Belarus

The research finds that democracy assistance carried out by international non-governmental organizations in Belarus has been largely ineffective. The INGOs implemented twice as many programs (65%) that were not designed to change the regime (regime-compatible) and those whose democratizing effect was unclear (measurable) than those aimed at overthrowing the dictator. Previous research confirms the widespread implementation of tame programs in Belarus. According to Jarabic's study, programs that met no resistance from the state – enjoyed generous funding in Belarus, however local actors considered them incapable of bringing real change (Jarabic, Rabagliati 2010). In addition, it was found that some implementing organizations working on Belarus invested in measurable programs - those that guarantee smooth implementation but may not bring the intended results (Pikulik, Bedford 2018, 17). By investigating effectiveness, the study adds to the previous research on several accounts: 1) It expands the time frame by which yields a more objective picture on what themes the organizations were working; 2) It measures the effectiveness on a comprehensive sample that include the whole range of democracy assistance programs rather than only on a limited sample of democracy aid, such as media and civil society; 3) It quantitatively demonstrates the approximate level of effectiveness of democratic assistance in Belarus conducted by INGOs in contrast to the previous qualitative research; 4) It contributes to the systematization of democracy assistance programs implemented in Belarus by constructing a typology of effective and ineffective ones.

However, it is necessary to test how robust the data is. Given that some programs, according to Bush's classification, can be both measurable and confrontational (if implemented effectively), it is decided to re-classify one program – media, from measurable (ineffective) to non-regime compatible (effective) and re-calculate the data to check its reliability. As a result, the share of effective programs increased by ten points (from 35% to 44%), whereas ineffective ones decreased accordingly (65% became 56%). Considering that a ten percent increase does not represent a dramatic growth of ineffective programs, the data is considered robust, and the level of effectiveness should not be accountable for using the wrong classification.

Bush's classification of effective and ineffective programs has been a valuable tool for analyzing the substance of democracy assistance in Belarus. The ratio of the effective and ineffective programs discovered in this research represents a picture of the actual effectiveness of democracy assistance for the stakeholders to consider. However, the analysis of the effectiveness of democracy assistance following Bush's classification might not be sufficient for drawing an unambiguous conclusion without looking at the actual performance of the confrontational programs. Diane Either finds that all Democratic Development Aid Programs (DDAPs) have limited impact on democracy promotion, including political aid programs, which are considered confrontational and thus effective by Bush. In particular, the political aid programs financed by USAID lacked reliable and in-depth evaluation focusing only on the enumeration of activities and emphasizing the problems preventing the achievements of objectives. (Either 2010) Although the confrontational programs are designed to change the regime, the extent of their effectiveness in the case of Belarus requires further analysis since there is evidence that not all political parties supported by international donors promote the interests of the opposition (Lavnickiewicz, 2017). All this leads to the conclusion that estimating the effectiveness of democracy assistance is not an easy task. To pursue this objective, there is the need for a better qualitative assessment of the performance of the confrontational democracy assistance, but that might be hard to do given the circumstances in Belarus characterized by the reluctance of the INGOs to share the information due to the illegal status of their activity. But what factors are accountable for the level of effectiveness?

4.2 Causes of low effectiveness of democracy assistance in Belarus

As expected, the INGOs' higher interest in donors' funding leads to a higher share of measurable programs, moreover, the negative impact of the INGOs' interest in donors' funding is quite acute, as also a previous study on Belarus suggests (Pikulik, Bedford 2018, 13). These results signify that measurable outcomes that demonstrate tangible but deceiving effectiveness of INGOs' operation actually help them win donors. The fact that the INGOs win funding with measurable programs can be explained by donor preferences. The majority of donors are governmental ones. This means that they need to demonstrate results to the public. When INGOs provide measurable outcomes with measurable programs, they satisfy the donors' interest in results, and in response, donors approve of broad funding of such programs. In turn, the INGOs' acute worry about donors' funding in Belarus and consequent implementation of the measurable programs can be explained by the changing donor states' strategic preferences which lead to unstable funding by

donors. For instance, pro-democratic forces received little money for the 2015 election campaign because the West's foreign policy changed towards Belarus after Ukraine Maidan in 2014; it was more interested in stability rather than democracy promotion (*Ibid.*, 9). The EU at least twice 2008-2010 and 2015-2019 increased strategic economic aid and simultaneously cut democracy one. As a result, the INGOs feeling the lack of available resources, implement measurable programs that are attractive for donors to arrange the continuity of the financing. One of the interviewees explained: "*The other factor is ... changes in donor policies. So, for example, MOTT closed its Belarus program altogether, and there were no more funds... what pools of funding are available, and that in Belarus has varied dramatically over the years, that sometimes it is an absolute gold rush and everybody wants to throw money at Belarus. Sometimes - like nobody is interested in it at all. It is more to try to find the continuity in funding, and that comes from the donor policies not necessarily from the implementers*"(Organization 6, 21.04.2021).

At the same time, another INGOs' interest that ensures their survival, that is, getting access to Belarus, showed a positive correlation with regime-compatible and partly regime-compatible – both types of programs. Resonating with Bush's findings (Bush 2015, 178), the INGOs with access to Belarus in terms of having the office there or affiliates implemented a higher share of regime-compatible programs (including both types). This is probably not a surprise if one recalls how closely the regime could monitor the activity of international democracy promoters in the country (Jarabic 2006, 87; Jarabik, Rabagliati 2010, 4-5). The worry of their offices not being closed had to push them to implement programs that would not meet significant local resistance. However, this factor did not exert much influence on the implementation of regime-compatible democracy assistance. The low influence of this factor on regime-compatible democracy assistance can be explained by the fact that many INGOs have never had access to Belarus, and those that used to have did not need it for a long period. Thus, the problem identified by Bush (Bush, 2015) is only moderately relevant in Belarus.

Interestingly, the analysis did not show an expected positive correlation between donor control and effective democracy assistance. Instead, it turns out that good donor control leads the INGOs to implement ineffective programs. Several explanations can substantiate this finding. First, this might happen because the EU in fact does not control their grantees highly. The EU's control might be worse because of its diverse membership (27 countries) compared to a single donor state. The negative effect of the lack of consensus between the EU member states was identified in previous research and traced to a weakening EU democracy promotion agenda (Panchuk,

Bossuet 2014, 3-4). Second, Bush's argument concerning observation and control assumes that donors want effective democracy assistance. However, donors may not be interested in effective democracy assistance. For a long time, Western donors have been more interested in cooperation with the regime than effective democratization, and only recently the West paid increasing attention to Belarus' democratization (Jarabic 2006, 85- 87). Although the US implemented more political projects than other donors, they insisted on "soft programs". In contrast, the EU registered most of its assistance with Belarusian authorities and provided little financing for civil society and direct democratization (*Ibid.*, 85-86). The negative effect of donor disinterest in effectively promoting democracy is also supported by research that finds that the lack of donors' commitment towards Democratic Development Assistance Programs (DDAP) has resulted in no or little impact (Eithier, 2010). The lack of the US and EU interests in democracy promotion in Belarus can be because of several reasons: 1) the general belief that it lacks influence in Belarus (Jarabic 2006, 91, Nechyparenka, 2011) as well as the constant electoral support of the authoritarian rule by Belarusian public (Silitski 2005; 2) the absence of direct threats from a regime that had been predictable and stable for many years should have satisfied the interests of both donors; 3) until the 2004 enlargement Belarus was not an immediate EU neighbor. Only after the 2004 enlargement (Jarabic 2006, 87), the EU decided to promote democracy in the neighborhood to prevent the possible spillover of the threats from authoritarian regimes (Buscaneanu 2016, 3). According to Jarabic, the US tried to engage the EU in building democracy in Belarus stressing that EU involvement is indispensable for successful democratization in Belarus (Jarabic 2006, 90).

The analysis confirmed the prediction about the relationships between higher donors' preference for measurable outcomes and the implementation of a higher share of measurable programs by INGOs in Belarus. There is some general understanding in Belarusian democracy assistance that to match donors' expectations, they need to report measurable and achievable outcomes (Pikulik, Bedford 2018,17). However, the impact of donors' pursuit of measurable outcomes on implementing the measurable programs is negligible (0,02). In addition, most of the organizations (75%) were asked for mixed quantitative and qualitative indicators. The growing realization in the Belarussian democracy assistance field that quantitative indicators do not clearly reflect the impact (Organization 6, 21.04.2021) can explain the low influence. It implies that donor officials at least partly are interested in effective democracy promotion in Belarus. On the other hand, although donors are not against measurable outcomes, they might not necessarily insist on them given the INGOs own initiative due to the need for funding to implement

measurable programs. In this case, it can be said that there is some imposition of measurable programs from the INGOs' side rather than from the donor's side.

As was expected, competition was positively correlated with ineffective democracy assistance programs, but only with the regime-compatible ones. The influence of this factor on the implementation of regime-compatible democracy assistance in Belarus (0,20) is somewhat equal to the influence of the INGO's pursuit of access (0,17) in terms of the score and because it exerts the influence only on regime-compatible programs, but it is lower in comparison to the EU and US strategic interests. This finding indicates that competition in Belarusian democracy assistance is more acute in getting access to the country. This can be explained by Belarus being very closed, and the regime will not easily allow organizations to be active in the country. However, since they are always under pressure to spend donors' money, they compete with each other for the opportunity to do so. Pikulik's study points to the INGOs "financial dependency" on the local actors in Belarus (in particular the opposition) in the sense that they need a group on which they may spend donor funds; he also claims that the financial dependency on one group in Belarus led to the implementation by INGOs of the same programs for a long period of time (Pikulik 2018, 12-13). This implies that competitive pressure taught the INGOs what programs are better to implement in order to receive access and ensure organizational well-being constantly.

Another independent variable related to the changes in the democracy assistance field, professionalization, showed a positive correlation with measurable and regime-compatible programs. This finding resonates with Bush's argument (Bush 2015) and implies that professional norms encourage the INGOs working on Belarus to concentrate on the technical aspects of the democracy assistance rather than on political ones. This is evident in the previous research, with the INGOs implementing projects for quick results that lacked attention to the details, which is a sign of the focus on technicality (*Ibid.*, 10). Professionals in Belarusian democracy assistance for a long time apply the same approaches and do not introduce innovative ones (Pikulik, Bedford 2018, 13), meaning that indeed they see them as valuable. Although the INGOs working on Belarus are highly professionalized, according to the regression analysis, this factor had virtually no effect on the implementation of the measurable and regime-compatible programs. Given this contradictory data and a low number of observations, it is not easy to draw a reliable conclusion regarding the influence of this factor.

The research confirms the negative influence of the control variable – the strategic importance of

Belarus to the donor state on democracy assistance. In particular, the higher strategic importance of Belarus to the EU and the US has been associated with a higher share of regime-compatible democracy assistance in Belarus. There have been times when the EU and the US strategic interests in stability prevailed over democracy promotion. The supply of regime-compatible programs by the West in the time of Belarus' strategic importance implies that the EU was afraid of the security threats that could emerge as a result of the harder push on the Belarusian regime that was absolutely disadvantageous in the time of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The US supported the position of the EU as an ally. In addition, overthrowing the dictator was not advantageous as Lukashenko was one of Putin's close associates and could help to settle the conflict that actually happened with his help in the "Minsk process" (Pikulik, Bedford 2018, 14-15). Such conflicting objectives between democracy and stability primarily negatively affect democratization. They are likely to emerge in an authoritarian context and may lead to the preservation of the regime (Grimm, Leininger 2014).

On the other hand, the strategic importance of Belarus to the EU was higher than to the US. The greater strategic interest of the EU than that of the US in Belarus can be explained by the closer Belarus' proximity to the EU border. The EU understood that threats coming from instability in Belarus due to democracy promotion would affect it more than the US, so it was more concerned about stability in Belarus, which is very important for the EU (Buscaneanu 2016, 3). As a result, the EU's more significant strategic interests had a greater influence on implementing regime-compatible democracy in Belarus.

Finally, democracy promotion in Belarus was more important for both donors than their strategic interests. First, it is evident in the huge difference between the amount of strategic aid sent by both donors to Belarus and Azerbaijan. Second, the influence of the strategic interests of each donor did not even reach 0.50 according to the regression analysis that demonstrates not the very strong influence of strategic interests on implementation of the regime-compatible democracy assistance in Belarus (if Belarus has been much more strategically important, the result could be higher). This is mainly due to the lack of strategic natural resources in Belarus and the US and EU expansionist ambitions and the aims to prevent the Russian influence in the region.

The analysis of the second control variable – the Belarusian domestic context, suggests that the INGOs performed democracy assistance in Belarus under highly restrictive conditions. Thus, the Belarusian domestic context should significantly influence a lower share of non-regime

compatible programs - 35%. This can be explained by the fact that, given severe penalties for confrontational programs, INGOs may have worried about their own safety and that of domestic partners and, as a result, refrained from implementing programs that could get them into trouble explains one interviewee whose INGOs had in its portfolio as ineffective so effective programs: *"...There were moments at which point that we stopped...or we just to do something else, the central ideas and themes would remain constant throughout it, but in terms of the specific tactics and activities were always adjusted depending on what circumstances allowed, what people were comfortable with and what was possible"* (Organization 6, 21.04.2021). Besides, the INGOs could simply not have human resources to conduct the confrontational projects because many partners have been detained (*Ibid.*, 21.04.2021). On the other hand, the INGOs were prone to implement a higher share of regime-compatible democracy assistance when the Belarusian context was more favorable. It can be because, during this time, Lukashenko wanted to get Western money in order not to depend solely on Russian aid (Pikulik, Bedford 2018, 10). For this, he had to demonstrate its liberal intentions by permitting implementation of democracy assistance programs, however, only those that could not threaten the regime's survival.

The study makes a valuable contribution to the previous research by undertaking an attempt to quantitatively demonstrates the extent of negative impact of the factors impeding democracy assistance, which has not been done in previous studies. In general, it enriches scarce research on the effectiveness of democracy assistance in Belarus and updates it. In turn, the advantage of Bush's design is that it directly focuses on the activities of INGOs and bears the convenience of replicability in another context by providing assumptions and a clear-cut measurement system. Also, its multivariate approach allows a more accurate picture of the effectiveness of democracy assistance, given the research consensus that democracy promotion is influenced by a host of factors. However, one of the main downsides of her design is that it requires getting the precise data that might not be found in the public domain as a result limiting the researcher to the use of the interview method.

4.3. Recommendations

The research provides several recommendations elaborated given Bush's suggestions (2015, 228-231):

1. Sharing the idea among stakeholders about the detachment of measurable outcomes from a clear democratizing impact will resolve the problem of overemphasis on measurable indicators. At the same time, spreading the knowledge about the ineffectiveness of regime-compatible programs will prevent their funding and implementation;
3. Establishment of the long-term contract relationships between the donors and the INGOs as well as disconnection of democracy aid from donor states strategic interests will ensure stable financing for INGOs and discourage the implementation of ineffective programs;
4. Promotion of the right kind of competition by donors in supporting the implementation of effective democracy assistance programs and condemning ineffective ones will lead to the implementation of confrontational programs in Belarus. Although it can be hard to do given Belarus' domestic circumstances, INGOs have many connections in the country and coordinate people in their fight against the dictator. This is evident in the plans for the future mobilization of the people around the 2022 Constitutional Referendum with the "Peramoga" plan.
5. Donor states should take more coordinated, decisive, and fast political actions such as economic sanctions to undermine the sustainability of authoritarian rule. As a result, unsatisfactory economic conditions should encourage large-scale protests in Belarus against the regime.

CONCLUSION

The present research aimed to examine how effectively democracy assistance has been carried out in Belarus by international non-governmental organizations and what factors are responsible for effectiveness. The study finds that democracy assistance in Belarus has been largely ineffective due to implementing a greater share of tame - ineffective programs (65%) by international non-governmental organizations. The main reason for this comes from the interaction of the donors, INGOs, and Belarusian government motives and incentives. US and EU strategic interests in the stability of Belarus (with the EU being somewhat more important because of Belarus' proximity and higher risk of threat proliferation) largely determine the implementation of INGO programs compatible with the regime, as well as the Belarusian domestic context because when the regime was favorable, it only allowed such programs. However, there are two other factors responsible for the implementation of such programs, but their influence was half as much, namely the interest of INGOs in access to Belarus and the competition between INGOs that increases the desire for access. On the other hand, the INGOs' pursuit of funding for survival is the most charged with the widespread implementation of measurable programs; by contrast, the impact of donors' interest in measurable outcomes has been negligible.

The study revealed that most of the phenomena that negatively affect democracy assistance identified by Bush also exist in the Belarusian context. However, contrary to Bush's assumption, tight donor officials, observation, and control do not improve programs in Belarus. At the same time, professionalization - the factor related to the changes in the democracy assistance field showed a positive correlation with ineffective programs but negligible influence.

INGOs have made many efforts to promote democracy in Belarus, but more coordinated action by stakeholders is needed to increase their effectiveness. Greater action by donor states to promote democracy in Belarus would make a much-needed contribution to this goal. At the same time, guaranteeing long-term, stable funding from donors should help organizations focus on promoting the democracy they are committed to in the first place, rather than on finding and accessing the country, which leads to ineffective programs: *“That is a moral obligation. That is fun... I enjoy it very, very much, and of course, it is important”* (Organization 4, 11.05.2021). The

main insights received in the present study can serve as a good basis for further research studying the effectiveness of democracy assistance.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Barakhvostov, P.A. (2017). The EU Democracy Promotion Policy Towards. The Eastern Partnership Countries. Retrieved from:
http://elib.bsu.by/bitstream/123456789/183791/1/%D0%91%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%85%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B2_%20%D0%9F%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%82_17-011-020.pdf, 20 October 2019.
- Bassuener, K. (2013). Belarus: Europe's Last Dictatorship. In: J. Kinsman, K. Bassuener (Eds.), *A Diplomat's Handbook for Democracy Development Support*. (3rd ed.) (331-351). Ontario: The Center for International Governance Innovation.
- Beichelt, T., Hahn-Fuhrm, I., Schimmelfennig, F., Worschech, S. (2014). *Civil Society and Democracy Promotion*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Belarus Digest. (2016). *Conduct and outcomes: digest of the 2016 parliament elections*. Retrieved from: <https://belarusdigest.com/story/conduct-and-outcomes-digest-of-the-2016-parliament-elections/>, 1 February 2020.
- Belarus suspends participation in Eastern Partnership initiative*. BELTA. Accessible: <https://eng.belta.by/politics/view/belarus-suspends-participation-in-eastern-partnership-initiative-141234-2021/>, 5 November 2021
- Börzel, T., Risse, T. (2009). The Transformative Power of Europe. The European Union and the Diffusion of Ideas. Working Paper 1. Retrieved from:
[file:///C:/Users/veron/Downloads/The_Transformative_Power_of_Europe_The_Europe_an_Un%20\(6\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/veron/Downloads/The_Transformative_Power_of_Europe_The_Europe_an_Un%20(6).pdf), 16 March 2021.
- Börzel, T., Risse, T. The Transformative Power of Europe. The European Union and the Diffusion of Ideas. Retrieved from:
https://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/en/v/transformeurope/research/Neuantrag_KFG_webseite_gek_rzt.pdf, March 18 2021
- Bouchet, N. (2015). Coordinating democracy promotion: lessons from Belarus. *Policy Perspectives*, 3(4). Retrieved from:
<https://css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/publications/publication.html/194086>, 5 October 2019.
- Burnell, P. (2007). Does international democracy promotion work? *Leibniz Information Centre for Economics*. Retrieved from:
<https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/199278/1/die-dp-2007-17.pdf>, 2 November, 2019.

- Buscaneanu, S., (2016). *Regime Dynamics in EU's Eastern Neighborhood: EU Democracy Promotion, International Influences, and Domestic Contexts*. NY: Springer Nature.
- Bush, S., (2015). *The Taming of Democracy Assistance: Why Democracy Promotion Does Not Confront Dictators*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carothers, T. (2015). Democracy aid at 25: time to choose. In: L. Diamond, M.F. Platner (Eds.), *Democracy in Decline?* (77-98). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Carothers, T. (2009). Democracy assistance without a plan. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Retrieved from: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2009/04/01/democracy-assistance-without-plan-pub-23023>, 16 January, 2020
- Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Briefing 2017. *Engaging Belarus on Human Rights and Democracy*. Retrieved from: <https://www.csce.gov/sites/helsinkicommission.house.gov/files/EngagingBelarus.pdf>, 18 January 2020.
- Cooley, A., Ron, J. (2002) *The NGO scramble: organizational insecurity and the political economy of transnational action*. *International Security*, 27(1), 5-39.
- Diamond, L. (1995). Promoting democracy in the 1990s: actors and instruments, issues and imperatives. *A report to the Carnegie Commission on preventing deadly conflict*. Washington, D.C: Carnegie Commission.
- Diaz, J. (2021). The EU Bans Belarus Airlines And Reroutes Flights Around Its Airspace. - NPR, 4 June. Accessible: <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/04/1003173750/eu-bans-belarus-airlines-and-reroutes-flights-around-its-airspace>, 26 September 2021
- Eastern Partnership. What is the Eastern Partnership*. European Council. Accessible: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/#>, 8 November 2021
- Ethier, D. (2010). Is Democracy Promotion Effective? Comparing Conditionality and Incentives. - *Democratization*, No. 1, 99-120.
- EU Relations with Belarus. Sanctions following the August 2020 presidential elections*. European Council. Accessible: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/belarus/>, 5 November 2021
- European Commission (2021) EU Aid Explorer. Recipients data from 2007-2021 (database) [Online] https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/explore/recipients_en (7 November 2021)
- European Council. (2021). Restrictive measures following the 2020 Belarus presidential elections. Accessible: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-following-the-2020-belarus-presidential-elections/>, 7 October 2021

- European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations. Belarus.* European Commission. Accessible: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/belarus_en, 3 November 2021.
- Eurovision (2021). EBU statement on Belarusian participation. Accessible: <https://eurovision.tv/story/ebu-statement-on-belarusian-entry-2021>, 17 September 2021
- Facts of Repression: Data shows extent of state repression in Belarus* (2021). Libereco. Accessible: <https://www.lphr.org/en/belarus-facts-of-repression/>, 2 October 2021
- Forbrig, J., Marples D. R., Demeš, D. (Eds.) (2006). *Prospects for Democracy in Belarus*. (3rd ed.) Washington, D.C.: The German Marshall Fund of the United States. Retrieved from: <http://pdf.kamunikat.org/1944-1.pdf>, 14 October 2019.
- Freedom House. (2021). Nations in Transit 2020. Azerbaijan. Accessible: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/azerbaijan/nations-transit/2020>), 6 November 2021
- Gressel, G., Popescu, N. (2020). *The best defence: Why the EU should forge security compacts with its eastern neighbours*. European Council on Foreign Relations. Accessible: <https://ecfr.eu/publication/the-best-defence-why-the-eu-should-forge-security-compacts-with-its-eastern-neighbours/>, 7 November 2020
- Grimm, S., Leininger, J. (2012). Not all good things go together: conflicting objectives in democracy promotion. - *Democratization*, No. 3, 391- 414.
- Hearn, J. Foreign aid, democratization and civil society in Africa: a study of South Africa, Ghana and Uganda. *Discussion Paper 368* *.Retrieved from: <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/4980/Dp368.pdf?sequence=1>, 25 October, 2019
- Interview Transcripts. Accessible:
- Jamestown Foundation (1997). Soros Foundation is forced to leave Belarus. Vol 3, No.163. Accessible: <https://jamestown.org/program/soros-foundation-is-forced-to-leave-belarus/>, 20 September 2021.
- Jarabic, B. (2006). International democracy assistance to Belarus: an effective tool? In: J. Forbrig, D.R. Marples, P. Demes (Eds.), *Prospects for Democracy in Belarus* (85-92).
- Jarabik, B., Rabagliati, A. (2010). *Assessing Democracy Assistance: Belarus (2010)*. Retrieved from: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/130765/IP_WMD_Belarus_ENG_jul10.pdf , 14 October 2019.
- Klysinski, K. (2019). Parliamentary elections in Belarus: a step backwards. *Center for Eastern Studies*. Retrieved from: <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2019-11-20/parliamentary-elections-belarus-a-step-backwards>, 28 January 2020.
- Korosteleva, E. (2012). Questioning democracy promotion: Belarus' response to the 'colour revolutions'. *Democratization*, 19(1), 37-59. Retrieved from:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233323675_Questioning_democracy_promotion_Belarus'_response_to_the_'colour_revolutions, 15 October 2019.'

- Kryvoi, Y., Wilson, A. (2015) From Sanctions to Summits: Belarus after the Ukraine Crisis. - *European Council on Foreign Relations*, No 132. Accessible: https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/ECFR_132_Belarus_May_5_-_version_2.pdf, 25 September 2021
- Lavenex, S., Shimmelfennig, F. (2011). EU rules beyond EU borders: theorizing external governance in European politics. *Democratization* Vol. 18, No 4, 885-909
- Lavnickiewicz, D. (2017) Лукашенко придумал партию власти (Lukashenka pridumal partiuyu vlasti). - *Gazeta.ru*. Accessible: https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2017/04/18_a_10632749.shtml?updated, 7 November 2021
- Manners, I. (2002). Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms? *JCMS*, 40(2), 235-258.
- Mello, P. (2016). Democratic Peace Theory. -*The SAGE Encyclopedia of War: Social Science Perspectives*. (Eds.) P. Joseph, 1-5. Accessible: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Patrick-Mello/publication/305207296_Democratic_Peace_Theory/links/5784a33008aeca7daac555e6/Democratic-Peace-Theory.pdf, 26 December 2021
- Nechyparenka, Y. (2011). *Democratic Transition in Belarus: Cause(s) of Failure*. (Dissertation) Institute Barcelona Estudios Internacionals, Barsezona. Retrieved from: https://www.ibe.org/ibe_studentpaper03_71875.pdf, 12 October 2019.
- Neuman, M., (Ed.) (2019). *Democracy Promotion and the Normative Power Europe Framework: The European Union in South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia*. Cham: Springer International Publishing AG.
- Panchuka, D., Bossuyta, F. (2014). Effectiveness of EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood through the lens of foreign policy analysis. - *Democratization*. 1-8.
- Pikulik, A., Bedford, S. (2018). Aid Paradox: Strengthening Belarusian Non-democracy through Democracy Promotion. *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, 20 (10). Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0888325418791725>, 10 October 2019.
- Pompeo, M. (2020). *Imposing Sanctions and Visa Restrictions on Additional Individuals and Entities Undermining Belarusian Democracy*. U.S. Department of State. Accessible: <https://2017-2021-translations.state.gov/2020/12/23/imposing-sanctions-and-visa-restrictions-on-additional-individuals-and-entities-undermining-belarusian-democracy/index.html>, 2 October 2021
- Řiháčková, V. (2008). *EU Democracy Assistance through Civil Society - Reformed?* EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy. Retrieved from: http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00004007/01/Pasos_paperEU_demass_10sept08.pdf, 23 December 2019.

- Schimmelfennig, F. (2005). The International Promotion of Political Norms in Eastern Europe: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis. Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series Vol. 5 No. 28
- Shotter, J., Seddon, M. (2021) How Belarus's protesters staged a digital revolution. - Financial Times. Accessible: <https://www.ft.com/content/a68a1c28-fdd0-4800-9339-6ca1e81d456a>, 8 November 2021
- Silitski, V. (2005). Preempting Democracy the Case of Belarus. *Journal of Democracy*, 16(4), 84-97. Retrieved from: <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/preempting-democracy-the-case-of-belarus/>, 17 October 2019.
- Situation at the EU's external borders with Belarus*. European Council. Accessible: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/belarus/>, 7 November 2021
- Steiss, A. (2021). *IIHF to move 2021 World Championship*. IIHF. Accessible: https://www.iihf.com/en/events/2021/wm/news/24134/iihf_to_move_2021_world_championship, 19 September 2021
- Sterling-Folker, J. (2000). Competing Paradigms or Birds of a Feather? Constructivism and Neoliberal Institutionalism. *International Studies Quarterly*, 44(1), 97-119. Retrieved from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/3013971?origin=JSTOR-pdf&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents, 17 October 2019.
- U.S. Department of State. Belarus (11/03). Accessible: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/belarus/34753.htm>, 17 August 2021
- U.S. Department of State. Foreign Operation Assistance: Azerbaijan. Annual Reports 2000-2019.
- U.S. Department of State. Foreign Operation Assistance: Belarus. Annual Reports 2000-2019.
- U.S. Department of State. *U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia. Foreign Operations Assistance*. Accessible: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/eur/ace/factsheets/fy2013/index.htm>, 13 August 2021
- U.S. Department of Treasury (2021). Treasury Holds the Belarusian Regime to Account on Anniversary of Fraudulent Election. Accessible: <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0315>, 6 October 2021
- Washington, D.C.: The German Marshal Fund of the United States. Retrieved from: [http://inozmi.spilnotv.com/books/hist/ua/\[Joerg_Forbrig,_David_Marples,_Pavol_Demes_\(Ed.s\)\]\(BookFi.org\).pdf](http://inozmi.spilnotv.com/books/hist/ua/[Joerg_Forbrig,_David_Marples,_Pavol_Demes_(Ed.s)](BookFi.org).pdf), 10 January, 2020
- Wetzel, A., Orbie, J. (Eds.) (2015). *The Substance of EU Democracy Promotion: Concepts and Cases*. New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Youngs, R. (2008). Trends in Democracy Assistance. What Has Europe Been Doing? *Journal of democracy*, 19 (2), 160-168. Retrieved from:

http://oldwww.upol.cz/fileadmin/user_upload/PF-katedry/politologie/EU.pdf, 5 November, 2019

Zukowska, E. (2016). The EU Democracy Promotion under Scrutiny: The Double Standards In The Case of Belarus and Azerbaijan. *Centre for European Studies*, 3, 79-95. Retrieved from: <https://ideas.repec.org/a/jes/eurint/y2016v3p79-95.html>, 18 October 2019.

В Беларуси закрыты десятки организаций гражданского общества. “Мир не должен оставаться пассивным наблюдателем репрессий,” – считает Amnesty International (V Belarusi zakryti desyatki organizacij grazhdanskogo obshestva. Mir ne dolzen ostavatsy pasvny nablyidatelem repressiy, - schitaet Amnesty International) (2021). Amnesty International. Accessible: <https://eurasia.amnesty.org/2021/07/23/v-belarusi-zakrytki-desyatki-organizacij-grazhdanskogo-obshhestva-mir-ne-dolzhen-ostavatsya-passivnym-nablyudatelem-repressij-schitaet-amnesty-international/>, 4 October 2021

Год назад в Беларуси прошли президентские выборы, кризис не разрешен до сих пор (God nazad v Belarusi proshli presidentskie vybori krizis ne razreshen do sih por). (2021). RFI. Accessible: <https://inlnk.ru/ELQLkN>, 20 September 2021

*Перечень организаций и физических лиц, причастных к террористической деятельности (Perechen organizacij i phisicheskix lyz prichastnyih k terroristicheskoy deytelnosti) KGB, from 747 to 764. Accessible: <http://kgb.by/ru/perechen-inf-ru/>, 7 August 2021
Accessible: https://t.me/nexta_tv/15042, 7 August 2021*

Websites of the INGOs

American Bar Association “Rule of Law Initiative”. Europe & Eurasia. Retrieved from: https://www.americanbar.org/advocacy/rule_of_law/where_we_work/europe_eurasia/, 12 March 2021.

American Councils for International Education. Retrieved from: <https://www.americancouncils.org/>, 12 March 2021.

American Council of Learned Societies. Retrieved from: <https://www.acls.org/search?search=Belarus>, 12 March 2021.

Amnesty International. Retrieved from: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/countries/>, 15 March 2021.

Assembly of Pro-Democratic NGOs of Belarus. About Us. Retrieved from: <http://belngo.info/about-assembly>, 16 March 2021.

Association of Central and Eastern European Election Officials. Retrieved from: <https://aceeeo.org/en/search/node/Projects%20in%20Belarus>, 15 March 2021.

Association for International Education and Exchange. Belarus Supports Programme. Retrieved from: <https://ibb-d.de/soziale-gesellschaft/foerderprogramm-belarus/>, March 12 2021.

- Committee to Protect Journalists. Countries&Regions Retrieved from: <https://cpj.org/about/>, 12 March 2021.
- Eastern European Democratic Center. Category: Activities in Belarus. <https://www.eedc.org.pl/kategoria/projekty/projekty-bialorus/trzeci-sektor-bialorus/>, 12 March 2021.
- Eduardo Frei Foundation. (2020). Countries Belarus. Retrieved from: <https://www.cda.nl/eduardo-frei-foundation/countries/belarus/>, 6 January 2020.
- Education for Democracy Foundation. About Us. Retrived from: <https://fed.org.pl/kim-jestesmy/>, 10 March 2021.
- Eurasia Foundation. Where We Work. Retrieved from: <https://www.eurasia.org/WhereWeWork>, 10 March 2021.
- Eurasia Foundation. Approach. Retrieved from: <https://www.eurasia.org/Approach>, 10 March 2021.
- Foreign Policy Research Institute. Retrieved from: https://www.fpri.org/?post_type=article&s=Belarus, 13 March 2021.
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Young worlds? Political and social views of young people in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Retrieved from: <https://www.fes.de/en/beitraege/comparative-study-youth-in-russia-ukraine-and-belarus>, 14 March 2021.
- Friedrich Naumann Stiftung. Offices. Europe. Retrieved from: <https://www.freiheit.org/foundation>, 17 March 2021.
- Freedom House. Belarus: Eye to Eye. Retrieved from: <https://freedomhouse.org/programs/regional-programs/eurasia-programs/belarus-eye-eye>, 10 March, 2021.
- German Marshall Fund. Fund for Belarus Democracy. Retrieved from: <https://www.gmfus.org/program/fund-belarus-democracy>, 15 March 2021.
- Human Rights House Foundation. Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House. Retrieved from: <https://humanrightshouse.org/human-rights-houses/belarus/>, 10 March 2021.
- Human Rights Foundation. Belarus Solidarity Fund. Retrieved from: https://hrf.org/programs_posts/defend_belarus/, 14 March 2021.
- Human Rights Watch. Europe/Central Asia. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia>, 16 March 2021.
- Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe. Belarus Raising Consciousness for Freedom. Retrieved from: <https://www.idea.org/Belarus%20Raising%20Consciousness.html>, 15 March 2021
- Institute for the Study of Human Rights. Past Events. Retrieved from: <http://www.humanrightscolumbia.org/wgga/past-events>, 12 March 2021.

- International Center for Journalists. Eurasia Media Innovation Challenge. Retrieved from: <https://www.icfj.org/our-work/eurasia-media-innovation-challenge>, 14 March 2021.
- International Center for Not-forprofit Law. Eurasian Program. Retrieved from: <https://www.icnl.org/our-work/eurasia-program>, 15 March 2021.
- International Federation of Journalists. Retrieved from: <https://www.ifj.org/actions/projects/europe.html>, 15 March 2021.
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Retrieved from: <https://www.idea.int/about-us>, 16 March 2021.
- International Press Institute. About. Retrieved from: <https://ipi.media/about/>, 14 March 2021.
- International Republican Institute. Eurasia. Retrieved from: <https://www.iri.org/country/eurasia/details>, 17 March 2021.
- International Research and Exchange Board. Europe & Eurasia. Retrieved from: <https://www.irex.org/region/europe-eurasia>, 11 March 2021.
- International Standards of Accounting and Reporting. Retrieved from: <https://isar.unctad.org/?s=Belarus>, 15 March 2021.
- Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. (2020). Belarus Office. Retrieved from: <https://www.kas.de/en/web/belarus/about-us>, 4 January 2020.
- Legacy International. Eastern Europe and Russia. Retrieved from: <https://www.legacyintl.org/eastern-europe-russia/>, 10 March 2021.
- National Center for State Courts. Retrieved from: https://ncsc-search.squiz.cloud/s/search.html?collection=ncsc-meta&profile=_default&query=Belarus, 15 March 2021.
- National Democratic Institute. Belarus. Retrieved from: <https://www.ndi.org/eurasia/belarus>, 7 January 2020.
- National Endowment for Democracy. Azerbaijan 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.ned.org/region/eurasia/azerbaijan-2018/>, 25 January 2020.
- National Endowment for Democracy. Belarus 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.ned.org/region/central-and-eastern-europe/belarus-2018/>, 25 January 2020.
- National Endowment for Democracy. Ukraine 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.ned.org/region/central-and-eastern-europe/ukraine-2018/>, 25 January 2020.
- National Endowment for Democracy. Belarus 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.ned.org/region/central-and-eastern-europe/belarus-2020/>, 16 March 2021.

- Nonviolence International. International community makes plea for nonviolence and transparency in Belarus. Retrieved from:
https://www.nonviolenceinternational.net/belarus_2020, 9 March 2021.
- Norwegian Agency for Development. Which countries are eligible for support and which will be prioritised?
<https://www.norad.no/en/front/funding/private-sector-development/enterprise-development-for-jobs/frequently-asked-questions/>, 10 March 2021.
- Norwegian Helsinki Committee. Countries We are Working With. Retrieved from:
<https://www.nhc.no/en/countries/>, 14 March 2021.
- Ostrogorski Center. Projects. Retrieved from: <https://ostrogorski.org/en/projects>, March 15 2021.
- People at risk (People in Peril Association). Development and Humanitarian Aid. Retrieved from: <https://clovekvohrozeni.sk/rozvojova-a-humanitarna-pomoc/>, 14 March 2021.
- Pontis Foundation. Retrieved from: <https://www.nadaciapontis.sk/?s=Belarus>, 11 March 2021.
- Prague Civil Society Center. What is the Prague Civil Society Centre?. Retrieved from:
<https://www.clovekvtisni.cz/en/centre-for-civil-society-in-ex-soviet-countries-established-in-prague-1992gp>, 18 March 2021.
- Private Agencies Collaborating Together. Belarus. Retrieved from:
<https://www.pactworld.org/country/belarus>, 15 March 2021.
- Stefan Batory Foundation. Civic Initiatives in Belarus and Ukraine. Retrieved from:
<https://www.batory.org.pl/en/about-us/programs-completed/civic-initiatives-in-belarus-and-ukraine/>, 12 March 2021.
- STINA News Agency. About STINA. Retrieved from:
https://stina.hr/staro/english/content_stina.html, 16 March, 2021.
- Swedish International Development Authority. Sida's work in Belarus. Retrieved from:
<https://www.sida.se/en/sidas-international-work/belarus>, 17 March 2021.
- Transparency International. Our Work In. Retrieved from:
<https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/belarus>, 14 March 2021.
- UN Electoral Assistance Unit. Elections. Retrieved from: <https://dppa.un.org/en/elections>, 17 March 2021.
- United Community House (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)). Retrieved from:
<https://www.undp.org/search?q=projects+in+Belarus>, 12 March 2021.
- USAID. About Belarus. Retrieved from: <https://www.usaid.gov/belarus>, 25 January 2020.

U.S. Embassy in Belarus. Retrieved from: https://search.usembassy.gov/search/?utf8=%E2%9C%93&affiliate=dos_emb_eur_minsk&query=projects+in+Belarus&commit=%EF%80%82, March 19 2021.

USAID. US Foreign Aid by Country. Belarus 2017. Retrieved from: https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/BLR?fiscal_year=2017&implementing_agency_id=1&measure=Obligations, 23 January 2020.

Vital Voices Global Partnership. Stories. Retrieved from: <https://www.vitalvoices.org/archive/?s=Belarus>, 14 March, 2021.

World Learning. Search Results for: Belarus. Retrieved from: <https://www.worldlearning.org/?s=Belarus>, 13 March, 2021.

Young Men's Christian Association. Belarus – National Council of YMCAs. Retrieved from: <https://www.ymca.int/member/ymca-in-europe/ymca-belarus/>, 12 March 2021.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Typology of the democracy assistance projects

The description of the projects was created by Sarah Bush and include the following categories (Bush 2015, 235-237):

- “Business: These projects promote business, private enterprise, free market economies, and entrepreneurship. They include working with chambers of commerce, offering training and networking opportunities to would-be business leaders, disseminating information about free enterprise, and supporting research and education on related topics.
- Civic education: These projects inculcate democratic values and responsibilities among ordinary citizens. They include seminars that educate the public (and often, but not always, youth) about human rights, citizenship, and democratic values and programs that supply civic education materials to teachers and schools.
- Civil society (general): These projects support the capacity and efforts of civil society organizations that are voluntary civic and social organizations. They include holding advocacy trainings for civil society leaders, publicizing civil society actors in the media, supporting events hosted by civil society organizations, and offering networking opportunities to civil society organizations. These projects refer to general civil society projects rather than efforts that primarily target business leaders, trade unions, women, or youth.
- Conflict resolution: These projects promote conflict resolution and peace under the umbrella of promoting democracy. They include holding training to reduce violent political actions, supporting peace agreements, and promoting reconciliation and co-existence across ethnic, religious, and racial lines.
- Constitutions: These projects support constitution-writing and constitutional reform. They include supporting constituent assemblies, disseminating draft constitutions, providing technical assistance (for example, on legal and historical issues related to constitutions), and supporting civil society organizations’ participation in the constitutional process.
- Dissidents: These projects foster the exchange of democratic ideas among dissidents and intellectuals. They include supporting literary publications, translating and disseminating key democratic texts or textbooks, and sponsoring conferences that promote the exchange of information about democracy. They support individuals that are activists (potentially abroad or underground) or democratic pioneers in the country, or both.
- Elections: These projects fund, train, and otherwise support election monitors and observers and also support free and fair elections in other ways. They include training political and civic leaders about the proper conduct of elections, offering voter education programs, conducting “get out the vote” campaigns, and supporting reforms or improvements to electoral processes by the government.
- Good governance: These projects promote the quality of the government’s provision of basic services by working with elected officials and civil servants. Good governance is defined by the United Nations as: consensus-oriented; participatory; committed to the rule of law; effective and efficient; accountable; transparent; responsive; and equitable and inclusive. These projects support technical assistance and

training on such topics as budgeting, office management, government anticorruption, and communication with the public.

- **Humanitarian assistance:** These projects provide humanitarian assistance, which is foreign aid that is given to the needy in order to save lives and alleviate suffering, under the umbrella of democracy assistance. They typically target people who are poor, ill, refugees or forced migrants, or political prisoners.
- **Human rights:** These projects promote human rights. They include supporting human rights education, providing resources for citizens to monitor and report human rights abuses, aiding civil society organizations that work on human rights, publicizing human rights violations in the media, promoting basic freedoms (for example, of expression), and encouraging countries' participation in international human rights laws and institutions.
- **Legislative assistance:** These projects seek to improve the quality of a country's national legislature (i.e., its parliament or congress) and the legislation it produces. They include training parliamentarians and their staff on writing laws or running an office, supporting parliamentarians' constituent outreach, helping civil society actors monitor and lobby the legislature, financing a media office for the legislature, and encouraging parliamentary reform and modernization.
- **Local governance:** These projects seek to improve the effectiveness and democratic character of local or municipal governments. They are good governance projects that take place locally.
- **Media:** These projects seek to foster a free, independent, and professional media (including new media). They include giving direct grants or equipment to presses or newspapers, supporting press freedom, and training media professionals and students in good journalistic practice.
- **Political parties:** These projects seek to strengthen and professionalize political parties. They include training for political-party leaders and members in campaigning, communication strategies, and developing party platforms.
- **Research:** These projects support research on democracy and related issues (for example, human rights). They include study trips, supporting universities and think tanks in new research endeavours about democracy, such as conferences, workshops, public opinion surveys, or publications.
- **Rule of law:** These projects support the rule of law. They include supporting transitional justice institutions, educating citizens about their legal rights and duties, providing technical assistance for legal reform projects (for example, to a project to reform the criminal code), monitoring the legal system, pro bono legal assistance to civil society activists, and training for lawyers, paralegals, judges, and other legal professionals.
- **Unions:** These projects support trade unions and cooperatives. They include holding training for union leaders in advocacy, offering special civic and voter education opportunities for union members, supporting unions' advocacy campaigns, conducting research related to trade unions, and supporting international union exchange trips.
- **Women's groups:** These projects support women's civil society groups and women's standing in society. They include supporting women's legal rights, offering technical assistance and other forms of support to women's civil society groups, and promoting civic education among women.
- **Women's representation:** These projects promote women's participation in politics. They include supporting female candidate training, building the capacity of female elected officials and civil servants, and encouraging women to vote.
- **Youth:** These projects promote youth (or student) civil society organizations. They include supporting school parliaments, offering technical assistance and support to youth civil society groups, and promoting democratic values among youth through education and discussion".

Appendix 2. International democracy establishment in Belarus

The following list provides the names of the 35 foreign organizations related to democracy establishment and working on democracy assistance in Belarus. It was compiled from the research data of Sarah Bush, scholars' resources, and the author's search, and includes INGOs that carried out at least some activity concerning designing and implementing democracy assistance projects in Belarus. The list is not exhaustive, however it may serve as a representative sample of the international non-governmental organizations promoting democracy in Belarus considering that Sarah Bush's classification of total major international organizations includes 150 organizations.

Political Party Foundations: Eduardo Frei Foundation (EFF), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung. *Non-governmental or quasi-governmental organizations:* American Councils for International Education, American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), Amnesty International, Association for International Education and Exchange, Association of Central and Eastern European Election Officials (ACEEEO), Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Eastern European Democratic Centre, Education for Democracy Foundation, Eurasia Foundation, Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI), Forum Civ, Freedom House, Human Rights Foundation (HRF), Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF), Human Rights Watch, International Center for Journalists (ICFJ), International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR), International Center for Not-for-profit Law (ICNL), International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), International Republican Institute (IRI), Legacy International, National Democratic Institute (NDI), Nonviolence International, Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Ostrogorski Centre, Prague Civil Society Centre, Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT), Stefan Batory Foundation, Transparency International, World Learning.

Appendix 3. Interview questionnaire

Introduction:

1. Could you please tell me what activities the organization you work for is engaged in?
2. What are your primary professional responsibilities?
3. Could you describe your professional experience in the current work activity?

Topic 1: Description of the organization

4. Where is your organization's headquarters located?
5. Does your organization have an office in Belarus? If not, could you please tell me where the office you are currently working at is located?
6. How many full-time employees at your office work on Belarus?
7. How many of such employees (working on Belarus) have a degree in international development or a related field (e.g., sociology, public administration, international relations, gender studies, human rights, and other disciplines that study development), or maybe previous experience in this area?
8. How many employees at your organization usually work on a single Belarusian project?

Topic 2: Projects in Belarus

9. Since when your organization has been implementing projects on Belarus?
10. Could you describe in more detail which projects the organization has been implementing? Has their type or content changed over time, when and why that happened?

Topic 3: Donors

11. Could you please tell me the name of your donors funding projects for Belarus? If not, could you please share how many of such donors are governmental organizations and private ones and from which countries they come from?
12. Do you receive funding from the European Union or any other multilateral organizations such as the United Nations (UN), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), or other?

Subtopic 1: Donors' grants

13. Do you need to compete with other organizations to get funding?
14. Is it difficult for your organization to get funding for projects? Could you express the difficulty level on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 is not difficult, 5 is very difficult).
15. Do you have any such donors whose funding strongly fluctuate from time to time? If yes, could you name them please?

Subtopic 2: Projects monitoring

16. While evaluating the impact of projects, do you differentiate between quantitative and qualitative indicators?
17. What kind of feedback your donors more often ask – quantitative, qualitative or both?

Topic 4. Priorities of the employee

18. Which three main aspects of your work motivate you to keep working on projects? Please place the most crucial aspect at the top and the least important to the third place.
19. How important is it for you to maintain a job at this organization? Could you describe the level of importance on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 - not important and 5 is very important).

Appendix 4. Non-exclusive licence

A non-exclusive licence for reproduction and for granting public access to the graduation thesis I

I Veranika Prykhodzka born on the second of August 1991

1. Give Tallinn University of Technology a permission (non-exclusive licence) to use free of charge my creation “International Non-Governmental Organizations and Democracy Assistance in Belarus, supervised by Antonius Johannes Hubertus Notermans and co-supervised by Roberto Belloni.

1.1. to reproduce with the purpose of keeping and publishing electronically, including for the purpose of supplementing the digital collection of TalTech library until the copyright expires;

1.2. to make available to the public through the web environment of Tallinn University of Technology, including through the digital collection of TalTech library until the copyright expires.

2. I am aware that the author will also retain the rights provided in Section 1.

3. I confirm that by granting the non-exclusive licence no infringement is committed to the third persons’ intellectual property rights or to the rights arising from the personal data protection act and other legislation.

1 The non-exclusive licence is not valid during the access restriction period with the exception of the right of the university to reproduce the graduation thesis only for the purposes of preservation.