



Association for Research
and Promotion of
Participative Democracy
in Eastern Europe

Our Approach to Strengthening Civil Society in Eastern Europe

Excerpts from the AREDA homepage

This is the PDF version of the „Vision“ branch of the AREDA homepage (www.areda.ch).

In this document we give our definition of civil society, then we explain why we believe civil society to be a major factor of progress in Eastern Europe. We also describe the risks and obstacles civil society encounters in this region. They are partly non-intended consequences of certain local conditions and partly effects of purposeful strategies of other political actors aimed at limiting or even suffocating components of the civil society.

We finally place our concern for civil society in the context of current western development aid for this region.

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1 Vision and goals

AREDA contributes to the reform and integration process of Eastern European countries. We work as a bi-directional interface between western development aid organizations and the civil society in Eastern European countries.

Our approach is somewhat different from the usual [development aid](#) for this region (i.e. economic reform, institutional reform and human rights). AREDA advocates the support of the civil society in Eastern Europe, for several reasons:

1.

Civil society is an autochthonous effort, based on local values and local perception of problems. Therefore its support helps us (and our western partners) understand people in our target countries. While this is in itself a fascinating experience, it also affects the feasibility of aid projects in all fields. There can be no sustainable development aid based only on the „gut feeling“ assumptions of western experts.

The first people we ask about development in Eastern Europe are ordinary people in that region. If they want to plant a tree, it's ok for AREDA, if they want to edit a newspaper, it's ok again. Of course there are ethical limits we respect. The important thing for us is to understand their motivation and have a dialogue with them. A dialogue means we understand better the local priorities; this has a good influence on our ability to detect good projects. And it means local people in our target countries learn to see their situation with other eyes and maybe get one idea or two.

2.

The second reason is our conviction that development in Eastern Europe also has a political dimension, in the sense that the region undergoes a transition towards democratic systems as well as market economy. So here development aid should have a certain democracy aid component. By the way, this isn't exclusively pertaining to Eastern Europe: it is difficult to imagine sustainable development aid if the question of who decides about aid distribution (and how) is ignored, or left in the hands of local governments. Democracy aid is a way to ensure that this problem is solved by all the people in the target country in the way they consider appropriate.

[Support of civil society](#) is a bottom-up approach to democracy aid. The other approach is to help build functioning institutions by financing their infrastructure and the formation of their staff (institutional approach). The support of civil society is more difficult for aid organisations for reasons we detail below. Nevertheless we consider it the sounder approach, as it is more robust: new institutions must be understood, used, monitored and considered necessary by local people in order to perform their roles. For this to happen, they have to grow on a soil of values, needs, relational patterns and problem understandings of a genuine local type. This is what the civil society helps build.

3.

AREDA considers *pluralism* a crucial aspect of successful transition in this region. When the soviet period ended, pluralism was a very new concept to people in the region and some of them, confronted with economic difficulties are ready today to call for an authoritarian leader to stop the „disorder“ of reforms and provide everybody with some income. Economic reforms will be more or less worthless if the centralist pattern of relationships between state and society will be conserved. One [advantage of civil society](#) is that it has the ability to propose those relationships to the public debate. It is a guarantee for a pluralistic and open society: civil society is not a particular institution or group, but a variety of groups with various goals. Even if some of the support recipients turn out not to use the aid efficiently, the general pluralism in the respective society is enhanced.

AREDA offers a mix of practical and innovative means to understand and support the development of Eastern Europe through the strengthening of its civil societies. We tackle the specific difficulties connected with this approach:

- not all countries have the same [type of civil society](#)
- some governments tend to be [hostile](#)
- the [information basis](#) needed is much larger than for classic technical cooperation
- the civil society challenges a [clientelistic system](#) which is deeply rooted in the region.

2 Development Aid

Development aid by rich countries is an important chance to help close the gap between poor and rich countries. This gap is currently so huge, that if the GNP per head of Ethiopia would grow at an astronomic 10% per year, it would need 65 years to attain the one Luxembourg has right now (actually the GNP of Luxembourg is growing faster than the one of Ethiopia).

The by far largest share of international development aid comes from OECD countries¹. Development aid is provided from one country to another or through multilateral organisations (UNDP, WHO, World Bank, OECD, EU). Besides governmental aid also private aid is provided through organisations of various size. An often important role for the economic development is played by foreign private investments, which should not be however confused with development aid.

Almost all rich countries provide some form of development aid, which can take different forms, like:

- emergency aid in case of famine crisis or natural catastrophe
- credits for the development of local infrastructure like communications or transports
- grant programs for professionals who need additional training in the donor country
- exchange and partnerships between cities or regions

In a historic perspective, development aid tends to diversify, because the experience until now has been disappointing: the gap between poor and rich countries has been growing larger for decades. So there is a need to try out new ways and find better solutions.

Lately the perspective on development has changed from a mainly economic one to a more complete one, encompassing aspects of equity and justice, income distribution, social development (basic education and health care), efficient and transparent government, environment protection and human rights².

Unlike with economic development, this holistic understanding of development is less uncontroversial. There are various reasons for this.

First is that if economic growth is accepted world-wide as something basically „good“, a multilateral development is more difficult to understand and agree upon. Governments in underdeveloped countries sometimes feel threatened, if development aid makes some social groups less dependent upon government's goodwill.

Another reason is that western development experts who have worked in classic projects of technical cooperation, building roads and hospitals, are sometimes reluctant to get involved in more complex projects with various, sometimes conflicting local stakeholders.

In Eastern Europe the bulk of development aid currently is provided in one of the following ways:

- private humanitarian aid by nongovernmental initiatives, including local authorities
- financial help for macroeconomic stabilisation (like fighting inflation or foreign trade deficits)
- infrastructure projects
- projects for institutional reforms (like helping the authorities to be more efficient and more transparent)

1 www1.oecd.org

2 A popular and very readable book reflecting this perspective is Amartya Sen: „*Development as Freedom*“, Oxford Univ. Press, 1999.

3 Support of Civil Society

This is a somewhat disputed subject. One important question is whether external support of civil society will hamper the development of a country, which is what some authoritarian governments in Eastern Europe and in the rest of the world keep saying³. At AREDA we consider there is no basis upon which external support for the civil society can be generally banned.

Another question is whether groups belonging to the civil society should be helped. One argument against it would be that civil society managed to exist during the dire soviet period despite repression by the state and almost total lack of external help. During this time individuals and groups activated out of the high motivation given to them by their beliefs, especially that one day democracy and freedom will be possible. So why can current NGOs not be expected to manage without external help as well ?

The role of civil society has changed as have the tactics of its opponents. In most Eastern Europe at least formal elections are now possible and governments can't arrest people on no more than ideological grounds (.counterrevolutionary. activity). Civil society now tackles new problems like the defence of independent media, the use of ethnic differences for populist political goals, extremist nationalism, social anomy and crime, and the growing threat by clientelistic networks. They now have certain opportunities which were formerly forbidden, but now just cost money, e.g. access to the internet. Even the development aid community has higher requirements towards civil society groups, like the need to have at least an office and if possible an e-mail address. Some requirements are even not explicit: the tiny group in a small town far away from the capital simply will never get to be known to the representatives of foreign embassies and aid experts. Finally, in some countries the legal existence of NGOs a financial problem to start with: e.g. in Romania to legally register an NGO costs between two and three monthly wages.

The conditions of economic survival in a capitalist, but poor country are different from those in a communist one. There is no more mandatory, lifelong, if not freely chosen, employment. This adds a certain stress upon people willing to engage in NGO activity. High unemployment rates make open membership in critically minded NGOs a risk in economies either largely state-owned or dominated by clients of the ruling party.

Of course the existence of civil society can't depend exclusively on foreign aid without its essence to become affected.

This is why at AREDA we encourage NGOs in target countries to develop their fund raising capabilities. We recommend them to build up and use together with other NGOs resource centers. We recommend projects which have a maximum of effect with the minimum of costs. And we point a finger to attempts by governments and local authorities to dry out financially the civil society.

3 These arguments have been extensively discussed based on different theories of international relations and international law, see Amartya Sen „*Development as Freedom*“, Oxford Univ. Press, 1999, chapter 6 for an overview.

4 A Definition of the Civil Society

There are several definitions for the term "civil society" which differ significantly, but there is little agreement about which one is the best.

AREDA uses following definition:

The Civil Society is the totality of groups (NGOs) and individuals in a country, who show a regular concern for the social and political context in that country, without fulfilling the function of political parties, who are autonomous from the government, and to whose goals also belongs to monitor the activity of the government or certain specific consequences of it, as well as to resist - if possible peacefully - any unlawful, dangerous or abusive government activity.

Of course such a definition needs some explanations:

- *groups and individuals*: often in the past committed individuals like Andrei Sakharov or Paul Goma have given civil society in their countries a voice in times when formation of independent groups was forbidden.
- *in a country*: civil society in Eastern Europe has been and is an essentially local phenomenon.
- *regular concern*: one-time participation in a protest march doesn't meet this definition of civil society, which needs a certain continuity in time.
- *for the social and political context*: we deal only with people who are concerned explicitly with social and political institutions or events. A folklore band wouldn't fulfil this definition, but an association of soldiers' mothers would: they deal with the human rights of their sons which they think are not respected by certain state institutions.
- *without fulfilling the function of political parties*: i.e. civil society groups don't participate in elections, have no specific representatives in parliament and don't seek any such position. Civil society groups are not a parallel parliament or government, they are a complementary space for citizen to express themselves, help each other defend their rights and stay informed about government activity.
- *autonomous from the government*: this definition doesn't include groups founded or significantly supported by the government. The idea of the government building up a civil society is defended by some authors⁴. Structures built up by governments generally have a questionable capacity to activate independently of - i.e. at times critical towards - the governments' policy.
- *to whose goals also belongs to monitor the activity of the government or certain specific consequences of it, as well as to resist - if possible peacefully - any unlawful, dangerous or abusive government activity*. The monitoring of government and parliament activity is a fundamental democratic right. The reach of civil society activity in transition countries goes in our opinion further. Its groups may also openly take position when decisions or laws seem to them „wrong“. One central role of civil society is to prevent the insulation of the political society against the rest of the people. The capacity of civil society to play this „safety net“-role is crucial in young or formal democracies. The readiness to protest in cases of need doesn't exclude groups from our definition, on the contrary.
- *if possible peacefully*: as long as peaceful protest is possible, we exclude violent protesters from our definition. In cases when every of peaceful protest is prohibited, we have a clearly abusive type of government. Our definition considers that in such situations also resistance movements can be viewed as an extreme expression of civil society.

⁴ E.g. OSMANI S.R.: *Participatory Governance, People's Empowerment and Poverty Reduction*. SEPED Conference Paper Series, UNDP/SEPED. Internet http://www.undp.org/seped/publications/conf_pub.htm, 31.07.2002. Osmani states that „creating a civil society where none exists and strengthening it where it does“ increasingly became a goal for UNDP and some governments. He also notes the counter-argument of M.L. Gray: „what is really a civil society [...] if the state wants to be their handmaiden ?“. Citing studies about Vietnam and Kyrgystan, Osmani explains that local NGOs „are in most cases the instrument of the state“. The controversy whether government founded and government supported groups can be considered part of a civil society, is still open.

There are 2 important questions which can be asked:

- how legitimate is the civil society, especially when compared to an elected government ? When they disagree, which voice is more representative ?
- is external support of civil society something good or bad ? The position of AREDA is described in section 3 above.

5 The Importance of an Active Civil Society

A few absolutist kings of the past have - despite their methods - brought also progress to their countries or solved imminent problems. Some are now even revered in history books. This doesn't make absolutist kingdom a particularly good system.

With time, people realised that one feature which makes out a good system is its capacity to perform reasonably well, even if a few of its leaders don't. The concept on which modern western states are based is one which uses checks and balances to make sure no individual and no institution can become so powerful that it can make the lives of all other people miserable. Parliament, executive power and justice system are separated and can keep each other into constitutional limits.

Not every country which has pro forma institutions of this kind, really has a functioning democracy. Some very undemocratic countries have institutions which bear similar names, but the parliament may consist of nothing but the docile followers of the all-powerful president, while the justice system can be just one branch of the repression machine.

Even countries which have started a transformation towards democracy, don't have to arrive there and for various reasons can fall back into an authoritarian pattern of power distribution. It is important to bear in mind that just a large building in the capital with „Parliament“ written on it and some smart, young, modern looking officials in the foreign ministry don't make up a democratic system.

Whenever the transition stops and the people's opportunity to influence the overall policy is slowly taken away from them, the checks and balances which usually work in western democracies are simply not yet in place. Media can get intimidated, opposition parties can be either co-interested, banned, „encouraged“ to split up or their access to the public is cut, courageous judges or prosecutors may have „accidents“ or be „promoted“ to some distant province.

In such situations the civil society is an important safety net. It allows people to express themselves directly and resist. It also gives them the opportunity to inform the rest of the world about what is happening.

Even when democratic transition does progress, it often happens that none of the established parties dares to pick up some topic of vital interest. The civil society can fill the gap: associations can e.g. protest against an unjust clause of a new law project which all parliamentary parties ignored. Or they can, as in the west, bring new topics (like environmental problems) to public discussion long before parties pick them up. Finally civil society can advocate the rights of minorities which are too small to count politically. Due to civil society the public discussion is much enriched and the lapse of time from when a problem arises until solutions are asked and offered is greatly reduced. Civil society adds pluralism and flexibility to the society as a whole.

The importance of civil society is not only functional (i.e. in term of its usefulness, of what it can do) but also constitutive (as such). If you live in a country or region where free association is either forbidden or simply inexistent, you have no possibility to have *any* participation into public decisions between elections and outside political parties. So if the parliament decides to double taxes and use this to increase the MP's income, you might well have to finance this for the next couple of years without any possibility to protest. Or if you are a person with a disability and no political party cares, you won't be able to require publicly any facilities or support, or even protest against their lack.

The final aspect in favour of the importance of an autonomous civil society is that it works based on ideas, not on prestige, power or money. Associations have no power to make, change or abolish laws or to shape the state's policy. Associations never have the financial resources of powerful economic groups. So which people are going to

be attracted in the active nucleus of NGOs ? Which people will be ready to work long and hard for modest income, no real power and no career future ? It will be people who really believe in the importance of certain ideals, or topics. Even if not all people will agree on all these topics and even if many associations might actually never reach their goals, they add the idealistic, moral voices to the public arena.

6 Types of Civil Society

Different countries have a more or less developed civil society. But also the type of groups which are most frequent within civil society may vary among countries. So it is difficult to formulate a general, easy-to-understand support strategy which will work for all countries in the region. The necessity to develop country specific, flexible support strategies makes an in-depth knowledge of the current situation a must.

The collapse of the Eastern Block found civil society in different stages. Additionally, what other social groups (ethnic minorities, former secret service, etc.) did, had a different influence on the role civil society played in the new regimes. Let's look at some examples.

- In the Czech Republic, civil society participated early in the peaceful power shift from old to new regime, what was called the „velvet revolution“. The best known member of the czech civil society, Vaclav Havel, became president of the country. Political pluralism and power alternance through fair elections became soon the rule of the game.
- In Bulgaria, the peaceful change was initiated and controlled from within the Communist Party. The civil society was not allowed to develop during the previous regime. Nevertheless political alternance happened as soon as 1990 when the Zhelyu M. Zhelev was elected as the first non-communist president in almost half a century.
- In Georgia, the term civil society is still discussed. After the independence, many of the groups in the civil society became or attempted to become political parties: the political society fed upon the civil one. Civil society is at its beginnings and still has to find its proper role in this country.

So in some countries the aid strategy might focus on ensuring fair elections or preventing the independent media from being eliminated. In another country the priority might be to form critical awareness against some populist politician or against agitation for interethnic violence. In any case there is no way to a sound strategy without a good understanding of the local values and priorities.

There are nevertheless some common features. In most countries, civil societies existed most of the time during the communist period, despite the repression which was directed at them. Communist regimes regarded any form of opinion expression which was not under government control as bad, hostile and dangerous (regardless of what was expressed). So civil society was from its origins an opposition to the government. When people in Eastern Europe speak of civil society, they think of a voice which is independent and usually critical of the government. An exception form in some countries the parallel „civil societies“ created and financed by the government.

When some western organisations impose in such countries a „friendly“ attitude towards the authorities as a goal of or condition for support, they loose something important: sincere cooperation with the civil society.

7 Governmental hostility

In democratic countries, people elect governments among programs and candidates proposed by different parties. The elected government is then separate from the other powers in the state, i.e. the parliament and the justice system.

In transition countries, this system works only partially. Often the same party who wins the elections has also a majority in parliament, or controls a huge state owned economic sector, which in turn sometimes controls economically all or nearly all medias. This can lead to important distortions in the electoral campaigns. When economic power is concentrated in the same few hands which control political power, the justice system often doesn't stay independent for too long either.

Power concentration in few hands is then slowly leading to a situation of generalised clientelism.

The clientelistic mode of distribution of money and opportunities of any kind is based upon - and reinforces - governments who don't represent the interests of the people who elected them, but those of the influent and rich. Clientelistic relationships insure that such governments can control the entire country. It is quite efficient in poor countries, but it depends upon the political and economic elite being the only one who can offer opportunities. The elite has to be able to deny opportunities and leave out people and groups who are critical, or grow too popular, or are so poor that they offer no profit perspective.

External aid to the civil society is endangering this system. Independent groups suddenly have internet access even if they continue to be critical. They can afford to rent a little office, where they can be reached. They can afford a lawyer to defend the rights of the poor.

Empowerment of different civil society groups leads to a pluralism of power. Pluralism is poison for clientelistic regimes. Such governments tend to say that civil society ruins economic growth or that external help must pass through government's hands.

Such an attitude is less and less accepted internationally.

So currently there are governments who adopt a different strategy. They construct a second, artificial „civil society“, indirectly financed by the government. This second „civil society“ receives so much money, that after a time they look more professional than the genuine one.

The fact that the artificial civil society is made of groups with virtually no ideals and no activity of their own made them easy to be detected by experienced foreign development experts. So those governments have gone one step further. In fact it is easy to collect the goals and priorities of the donor organisations from their internet sites and their brochures and to compile virtual goals and programmes.

This is a type of hostile behaviour which doesn't attempt to silence civil society by arresting its members or kick them out of their jobs. Its purpose is to channel relevant external help away from them. A side effect is that with these resources loyal persons and groups can be rewarded.

8 Useful Information

The support of civil society in Eastern Europe is dependent upon having access to the appropriate information:

- Maybe the most difficult to obtain is the information upon *generally accepted priorities*. This information is needed in order to estimate if a new project proposal has chances to be perceived as useful and sensible by the local public. On the other side, some innovative ideas might not seem so to locals in the beginning. You'll need enough information to assess whether after completion of the project the new idea might catch or not. This is pertaining also to ideas which may seem normal common sense in the West, and it might be difficult to understand why in another cultural context it simply isn't „tasty“.
- Another aspect is the *evaluation* of NGOs. At AREDA we know quite a couple of NGOs and we don't believe that EVERY member of the civil society has realistic, understandable and useful goals. Detailed information about the NGOs' activity and resources needs to be gathered and evaluated by a country-specific stan-

dard. This is not information available on the Internet in international languages. It has to be researched in places sometimes far away from the capital and usually is open only to people knowing the local language and culture.

- Governments tend to be sometimes [hostile](#) towards support for civil society. Aid providers have to know *what is tolerated* in a particular region to avoid exposing themselves and their local partners to sometimes violent repression. Western citizens usually are under a certain protection by their governments, but their local partners and their families are not. Hostility by the government doesn't mean the same thing as lack of understanding by the population: two different problems with different solutions.

More often than not, work with civil society groups in Eastern Europe is political. Knowledge about government activity and statements and of those of important, well known individuals and groups, is useful. Some projects have attempted to translate this information and put it on the Internet, but few were successful. Often, information in international languages on the Internet is distorted by linguistic problems (terms missing in occidental languages) and political preference. Information available from international news media are even more prone to distortion. Western journalists tend to communicate in common western concepts like "left", "right", "conservative", "social-democratic", "trade unions". Reality can be completely different. E.g. trade unions can sometimes be quite conservative i.e. hostile to any change, social-democratic parties can be the club of extremely wealthy entrepreneurs and social-liberal parties can promote in fact a very ugly chauvinism.

9 Clientelism

Clientelism is a general term for long term relationships between persons or groups, in which:

- one side, the patron or Big Man, is the only one who can arbitrarily provide - or deny - several vital opportunities (like the right to buy or sell, or the access to medical care or education), and
- the other side, the client, can't objectively have a supportable life without these opportunities, and
- the patron uses his power to coerce the client to constantly taking or not taking certain action (like selling - or not selling - his products to a specific person or at a specific price).

In large parts of Eastern Europe, clientelism is ubiquitous. Small local patrons like the manager of a local company are themselves clients of county level leaders of the government party, who owe their position to regional Big Men and so on. When those relations become generalised we speak of [clientelistic networks](#). They tend to connect people and power from very different areas.

Sometimes, because of goodwill or inexperience western observers interpreted symptoms of clientelism as reforms gone wrong, finding a cause in the inexperience of local authorities, lack of resources or an inappropriate legal framework. While this might be true in a few cases, it generally is not, as many locals will confirm. Clientelism is a stable system on a national scale, not reforms gone wrong. Clientelism is not the result of the people in power not knowing how to do better or not having the money to do better. It is purposely there, because it serves the most influential and powerful and it feels familiar to them.

Poverty tends to stabilise a clientelistic system: the poorer ordinary people are, the more dependent they are upon the goodwill of their patrons. The political elite and its government gives in such cases great care in order to keep the private sector weak, so no independent income generating activities can grow outside the clientelistic network. Dependency is the currency in a clientelistic system and any effort to increase independent opportunities for ordinary people is correctly perceived as a tendency to lower the value of patrons' goodwill. So sometimes when development aid comes, the clientelistic system will defend itself: simple projects will just never finish, or their administrative cost will become prohibitive.

Clientelism is an ugly, sad world, a frustrating experience also for local people.

Related phenomena

Clientelism is sometimes confused with *corruption*. Corruption is about individual transactions: somebody wants a new car, for which he would have to wait 2 months. So he pays the reseller an extra overtax and he receives it in 2 days. Clientelism, but not corruption, is a continuous phenomenon of coerced loyalty. Somebody who enters a

clientelistic relationship doesn't know when, how or how long he will have to pay this „favour“.

Another frequent confusion is between clientelism and *mafia*. The principle how they produce coerced loyalty is similar, but one important difference, is that clientelism is not criminal or illegal. It's just abusive, humiliating and deeply frustrating, but it is not necessarily about drugs or smuggling.

Clientelism is frequent in Eastern Europe because it has [cultural roots](#). This explains why it exists from Sofia to Vladivostok, although there is no central power any more to impose it.

Clientelism is about monopolies of distribution of resources and opportunities. It is about getting into the position to deny other people access to markets, goods, employment, security, health care, even if they are entitled to them, and asking a price for giving it back and about this becoming so regular, that general loyalty can be asked as payment on a permanent basis. This is important, because when this system becomes stable, it means money is not important, profit is not important, technology is not important, moral is not important. The monopoly of distribution will be the one thing a patron will not sell for any price and for any promise.

Clientelism is dangerous, because it can infiltrate even sound democracies with working markets and political checks and balances.

10 Cultural Roots of Clientelism

When we speak of cultural roots we have to take a look at recent history, at how people have been living in the last 20 or 30 years.

The economy in the Comecon states was centrally planned. A central institution gathered all the information about resources and needs, then a planning committee decided what should be produced first and more (usually more weapons than consumer goods) and the production quotas were sent back to the factories and agricultural „cooperatives“ which were all owned by the state.

In time, this system was eroded from within. Factory bosses⁵ grew independent. Progressively they managed to skim the resources and report phoney production numbers. Later they became the real owners of the factories, which gave them unparalleled wealth and power, because not only income but also social services like housing, education for the children and medical care came connected with the work place. After the end of the communist regime, the power of factory bosses grew even more: privatisation gave them the only thing they hadn't before: the right to sell shares in their companies⁶.

Economic liberalisation reduced the social activities of the state, making the social services provided by companies the only way for millions to survive. Factory bosses were the only providers of all means of subsistence - and could withhold them arbitrarily, on a case-by-case basis.

So a great part of people in Eastern Europe grew up with the figure of the local big man as an universal provider of opportunities and security. The idea of keeping being loyal to the factory boss is familiar: cutting his lawn when he says, doing overtime when he says, telling journalists from the outside what he decides. The concept of being on one's own in a world which provides opportunities and freedoms (which usually is not even what Eastern European everyday life looks like anyway) is unfamiliar. Even when changing employer or leaving the town they grew up in, people will find it humiliating and sad to seek and join new clientelistic networks, but in a way it is a solution with known costs and risks.

5 Some authors use the term "manager", which suggests a function which has nothing to do with that of a boss of a socialist "production unit".

6 An interesting analysis of the power of factory "directors" in Russia can be found in McFaul, Michael: *"State power, institutional change, and the politics of privatization in Russia"*, World Politics 47 / Jan.1995