The uphill struggle

A study on Swedish human rights aid to Russia

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Abstract

The aggressive foreign policy pursued by the current Russian government has resulted in a search to improve the tense diplomatic situation by non-military means. To Sweden, who has been, is, and always will be dependent on a relationship with Russia, such peaceful measures are of outmost importance. To investigate this course, namely the human rights and democracy promotion that Sweden endorses through foreign aid, this thesis has investigated two major theories that previous literature has ascribed as especially important when identifying obstacles in authoritarian contexts. These two theories are enlightened self-interest and cultural relativism. The first theory mentioned deals with a security aspect of allocating aid, and the latter the differences in understanding human rights between a donor and a recipient.

To gain a deeper understanding of perceptions of the subjects studied, Swedish human rights promoters, this thesis has interviewed six individuals located centrally within Swedish governmental organizations and four within human rights promoting organizations whose work in Russia is central to the organizations mission.

The conclusions that this thesis has reached is that a security-aspect, found within the theory of enlightened self-interest, is barely present as a mindset when allocating aid, nor as a measure to lessen the tensions between the countries. One representative from one organization deems security as a fundamental reason as to why aid is given. The human rights promotion’s positive properties in alleviating tensions between the two countries, are only regarded as positive side-effects. Contrary to previous literature, Swedish aid has an altruistic nature. Cultural relativism was dispelled as a characteristic within Russian civil society organizations that the Swedish donors are in contact with. However, due to state-led oppression, Swedish aid is given as a precautionary provision against the Russian propaganda mechanism the donors perceive has a great, if not the greatest, effect on the Russian people.

**Keywords:** Sweden, Russia, democracy promotion, human rights, civil society organizations, enlightened self-interest, cultural relativism, security, foreign aid.
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1. Introduction

In an interview from February 10, 2019, with the newly appointed Swedish Minister of International Development Cooperation as of January 2019, Peter Eriksson, a new direction for Swedish foreign aid was announced. In the new direction Sweden will keep its humanitarian and development aid support to sub-Saharan countries but attain a more concentrated focus on Eastern Europe. One of the most central policies featured in Sweden’s new strategy is democratic development in the country’s proximity. On the one hand, Eriksson expressed a concern regarding the fact that the European Union lately is showing less interest in Eastern Europe, and on the other hand that the global democratic recession can be of dire consequences to not only Sweden but the world.¹ The combination of these trends might very well result in a further Russian stagnation concerning its human rights situation.

In recent years, the relationship between Russia and the EU, as well as Russia and the USA, has deteriorated and become less cooperative. In particular, the annexation of Crimea in 2014, alongside continued violence in Eastern Ukraine and the widespread breakdown of human rights in Russia are seen as very troublesome. In addition, widespread harassment of democratic representatives and organizations, both foreign and domestic, and corruption scandals around major sporting events, such as the Winter Olympics in Sochi, or the World Cup in football 2018, have all contributed to deteriorating relations. This new course that Putin has steered Russia into has resulted in economic and diplomatic sanctions applied by the EU and the US (hereinafter the West). In turn, the implemented sanctions have caused the Russian ruble to collapse and the subsequent Russian financial crisis during 2014-2015.² Moreover, Russia has, in several cases, been linked to aggressive disinformation campaigns with the purpose to mislead voters in democratic elections both in the United Kingdom and the USA.³ Despite all this, there are, at the time of writing, no signs of Russia neither giving up on Crimea nor Eastern Ukraine, nor halting its aggressive disinformation campaigns.⁴

The recent amplification of military aggression by Russia in Eastern Ukraine has instilled caution in the West. For instance, not since the end of World War Two has Swedish government officials such as the foreign minister, defense minister and the supreme commander of the Swedish armed forces, explicitly and publicly expressed Russia as a military threat. This has in the Swedish public raised the question of a NATO-membership. The diplomatic relationship between Sweden and Russia is currently at a freezing point. Previously, Swedish relations with Russia have extended over many societal areas, such as trade, tourism and environmental cooperation. The Swedish Security Service specifically identifies Russia as the biggest threat to Sweden stating that Russia continues to use both military and non-military means of power as foreign and security policy instruments. To neutralize the threat, Sweden is through its strategy devoted to promoting sustainable development, and human rights in Russia mainly via foreign aid through civil society organizations.

Though, it should be noted that Sweden, and the West, have been working with endorsing human rights activities and programs advanced by civil society organizations in Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union. This has been done in order to promote a democratic transition with hopes of improving the general security situation. However, despite these activities, the human rights situation in Russia has not improved. On the contrary, it has been severely weakened. Among the problems that foreign aid donors might experience when democracy promoting in Russia is the “Russian foreign agent law” from 2012 that stipulates all civil society organizations engaged in “political activities” and receive foreign donations must declare themselves as foreign agents. There are many obstacles for foreign aid donors, beyond the Russian state-led suppression of foreign agents.

In sum, while Western human rights advancement and democracy promotion is meeting Russian governmental resistance, current and previous literature have not given an in-depth

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5 Ullman, pp. 189.
account of what other problems might be experienced in connection to human rights and democracy promotion by Swedish officials in the Russian context. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to find out what these problems may be. This will be accomplished through interviews with Swedish foreign aid donors. This is important to investigate, because understanding what the obstacles are when working to promote democracy and human rights on the ground in the Russian context may also result in finding solutions to overcome them. Thus, this thesis intends to shed light on how we may work to improve the human rights situation in a context where it is opposed by a government. In so doing, this thesis also contributes to the research area of Swedish aid. Theoretically, this thesis implements two major theories within aid-literature, to the context of Swedish development work in Russia: enlightened self-interest and cultural relativism. The main purpose is thus to analyze the potential problems that Swedish foreign aid donors might experience, through two perspectives that previous literature has identified as instrumental when understanding the topic of foreign aid and democracy promotion. These theoretical perspectives consist of a security-based notion: enlightened self-interest, and a potential negative recipient perspective on what the donor wants to promote: cultural relativism. Thus, the research question of this thesis is the following:

To what extent can enlightened self-interest and cultural relativism account for obstacles for Swedish human rights promoters in Russia, and how may they be solved?

As will be explained in the following theory section, the two concepts of enlightened self-interest and Russian cultural relativism are highly relevant and often used when discussing obstacles in work relating to human rights promotion. However, they have to the best of my knowledge, not yet been studied together in the context of Swedish foreign aid to Russia. To the extent possible, the results of this thesis will be a contribution to the existing literature.

In order to answer the research question, the two central theories analyzed will be discussed and defined in the following chapter in order to understand how they relate to democracy promotion.

2. Theory

Enlightened self-interest

When discussing what problems foreign aid donors might encounter one must consider the role of state relations in international politics. The main critiques against foreign aid is the self-interest with which states act. The motives for disbursing foreign aid can be masked in a variety
of different forms. The self-interest discourse has dominated previous research inasmuch as in many studies it is the common answer to why states engage in distributing foreign aid.\textsuperscript{11} Even though early foreign aid literature ascribed altruistic reasons, realistic arguments has dominated the scene.\textsuperscript{12} It is a constant within foreign aid literature.\textsuperscript{13} “Traditionally, aid was provided within the framework of meeting ‘needs’,” however, this has changed.\textsuperscript{14}

Self-interest, in wide terms, can be described with a term that is one of the older schools of thought within international relations: realism. For realists, all politics is war by other means.\textsuperscript{15} A country’s international politics sole goal is to reach necessary objectives in the most efficient way, regardless of ethical considerations.\textsuperscript{16} What this means in the realm of aid policy is that donors will more often than not donate to countries, or projects, that are congruent with its security goals.\textsuperscript{17} Thomas Hobbes, one of the founders of realism, alleged that in a natural state, the world is a state of anarchy, and states are the only actors who can provide security to the people. He wrote that there are three causes to quarrel: gain, safety and reputation.\textsuperscript{18} Aiding another country’s human rights development might very well cause conflict due to external influence may be seen as a provocation. Nevertheless, one’s own security is central to a realist, and therefore trying to influence others to do what is in line with one’s own interests is of paramount importance.\textsuperscript{19} For example, when analyzing future work for the US foreign aid, Louis Picard et al. notes that improving governance in countries such as Russia, even against stiff odds, is important for the security of the US.\textsuperscript{20} This would be a simple answer for a state that traditionally allocates aid for strategic reasons such as the US, however, as previously mentioned, it is unreasonable that a country with a history of altruistic motives behind its humanitarian and development aid, only has security in its interests. It may be the most important motive behind a strategy, but, according to this thesis, it cannot be all. Sweden has a history of

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Kroft2} Kroft, pp. 3.
\bibitem{Riddell1} Riddell, pp. 6.
\bibitem{Barratt} Barratt, Bethany, Human rights and foreign aid: for love or money?, Routledge, London, 2008, pp. 11.
\bibitem{Barratt1} Barratt, pp. 11.
\bibitem{Barratt2} Barratt, pp. 12.
\bibitem{Kroft3} Kroft, pp. 15.
\end{thebibliography}
pursuing development goals for the sake of development, puts the theory that Swedish foreign aid is given mostly for realistic reasons into serious doubt. Therefore, this thesis turns to enlightened self-interest (hereinafter used interchangeably with self-interest), a subcategory often connected to realism.

The nature of the definition of enlightened self-interest has been the subject of critique and revision. Alexander de Tocqueville discussed this concept first in 1840 in his *Democracy in America*, where he observed American political activism. He was worried that if citizens would become passive in public life, the state would take over, and that would be fatal for a democratic society. Political involvement could not and cannot be motivated by a utilitarian cause, but a chance to promote one’s own agenda would motivate the common democratic citizen to act. It would be in the individual’s narrow self-interest to withdraw from political activism, for simple reasons such as resting from work; Tocqueville thought that the exercise of one’s political freedom would guarantee one’s interests, as well as engaging others, hence being an enlightened self-interest. He noted that “Americans have found a way to combine their own well-being with that of their fellow citizens.” This theory sought primarily to explain the reasons for American activism in a time where democracy as we know it today was still transforming. Despite it being a contextual theory on a contemporary society, the model has been used in various ways to show other societal movements course of action, such as the international arena where the actors are states and need security through peaceful means. Even though this theory is not a sub-category of realism per se, it has been grouped together with realism in several studies. Since the ultimate goal is to do good for yourself by doing good to others, measures to secure stability through influencing and intervening in other contexts, are acceptable. Promoters of enlightened self-interest don’t think of the world in anarchic terms, nevertheless, it is important to discuss the implication of realism in order to understand the security-aspect of enlightened self-interest.

To allocate aid is a political decision, therefore aid is to a varying degree given due to self-interest. Whether or not there is complete lack of egoism does not seem to be relevant in the discussion of development foreign aid motives, only to what extent self-interest is pursued.

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21 Bjerninger, pp. 21.
23 Kimpell, pp. 353.
24 Kimpell, pp. 354.
25 Kimpell, pp. 354.
26 Kimpell, pp. 354.
27 Riddell, pp. 92.
“Aid is about states and individuals. Self-interest defines the motives of actors on both sides of the foreign aid process.”

According to Roger Ridell there exists two schools of thought for aid-motives that stems from self-interest; one in which self-interest has a profound effect on aid, and one where it does little. What is fascinating is the fact that self-interest cannot be taken out of the equation when discussing aid. Self-interest in aid refers to the focus of satisfying a donor’s own needs, which may be in the form of security or strategy, economic gains, spread of one’s own cultural, and ideological interests. According to this perspective, if a democratic donor gives money to a recipient to for example promote democracy, the donor increases its own security. A democratic state is according to many studies less inclined to go to war or engage in a conflict with another democracy.

The moral obligation of richer and more developed countries to assist the less advanced countries is grounded in enlightened self-interest. Neal Preston argues that working toward alleviating the global disadvantage that exists between states, is necessary for the well-being of our entire species. For example, Paulo Pinheiro, the chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria asked military powers to recognize their enlightened self-interest that they would have in ending the Syrian civil war because “the chaos that has engulfed Syria no longer affects Syria alone”. Luke Glanville notes that enlightened self-interest is a valuable notion in giving states a “reason to act on behalf of vulnerable foreigners in certain instances.”

Acting and aiding can be a useful tool to secure peace and therefore one’s own interests. The main broad frames of enlightened self-interest are to pursue global public goods such as peace, stability, environmental health and population control. Even though these words connotate an altruistic nature, and security can be defined in its own category, scholars have noted that enlightened self-interest could fit in multiple categories, meaning that security is an inherent aspect of this theory. In addition to the security objective of this theory, it embraces a “nobler” moral obligation of

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28 Picard, pp. 12.
29 Riddell, pp 92.
30 Kroft, pp. 16.
33 Glanville, pp. 336.
34 Glanville, pp. 337.
36 van der Veen, pp. 12.
pursuing global stability and supporting democratization and democracy. These are two very fundamental aspects of Swedish foreign aid.

Enlightened self-interest has in literature been mentioned as a real motive for Swedish foreign aid. Jan Bjerninger describes the need for peace and stability as essential and as the world globalizes, the need for good relations for a small and export dependent country, has only increased through the years. This has at times manifested itself expressly in foreign aid. For example, the Defense Committee in 2007 stated that environmental and climate issues were the constituted the most serious threats the mankind. Hence, Sweden allocated large sums to India and China in order to secure its own interests.

The main purpose of this thesis is to identify the obstacles a donor might have in implementing human rights, whereby security motives are a very relevant issue when coming to both the decision-making of what organization should be receiving aid, but also in the problems that may appear when working together with Russian civil society, in that it may worsen Swedish Russian relations. Sweden is historically seen as one of the few “donors who have articulated solidarity and development as major factors influencing allocation of aid.” However, it has been shown that, firstly, over the past 15-20 years, that donors have altered the administration of aid programs to be put more clearly within foreign ministries, moving towards a ensuring a broader consistency with strategic interests. Secondly, Swedish aid has shifted from idealistic reasons to realistic or neo-realistic purposes gradually since the 1960’s. Even though promoting democracy for the sake of improving democracy and human rights is an idealist argument, and has been the focus of much of Sweden’s aid in the post-Cold War era, many scholars have argued that democracies don’t wage wars against each other, making promoting democracy elsewhere a security interest. Therefore, this thesis will use the theory of enlightened self-interest as a framework to understand whether this view on international relations can be applicable to the case of Swedish development aid in Russia, and if this view may contribute to the problems faced by Swedish human rights donors working with Russia.

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37 van der Veen, pp. 57.
39 Riddell, pp. 96.
40 Riddell, pp. 96.
41 Kroft, pp. 152.
Cultural relativism

In her book *Human Rights as Ethics, Politics and Law*, Elena Namli raises arguments against the liberal defense of the universality of human rights. She focuses her criticism on Donnelly. She criticizes him based on his central role as theorist in the discursive field, and on the basis of his understanding of human rights, which she considers to be typical of the Western world’s liberal culture. She also points out that Donnelly’s view is probably the most common in the Western world.

Firstly, it is questionable whether there is consensus on human rights. The fact that the majority of the world’s countries have ratified human rights treaties does not really prove anything since there is a substantial difference between ratifying and properly implementing. The UN is also weak in executive power, in relation to the states. Many states do not report to the UN guiding committees, while others persist in delaying or even delivering poor reports. Even though a state may receive severe recommendations, there is no need to adhere to them since a state is sovereign and the sole guarantor of human rights.

Secondly, she discusses the problematics of isolating the abstract part of human rights from the practical one. Donnelly writes that the *idea* of human rights is universally accepted. The usage of the diffuse human rights language in the international arena is counterproductive, according to Namli. She believes that Donnelly distinguishes human rights on an abstract level and a practical level, where the rights are constituted solemnly at an abstract level, but where there are differences at the practical level, in terms of for example social and cultural factors. Due to this approach, he ignores the political factors that come into play that can influence the implementation of human rights. She also argues against overlapping consensus, which Donnelly re-interpreted from Rawl’s model within a liberal state. Donnelly believes that differences are overcome by human rights and that agreements indicate universality, despite different manners of implementation. There are issues such as the various views on religion’s role in a society where human rights are to be respected. For example, the popular subject of the relationship between Islam and human rights, asks the question whether human rights doctrine such as freedom of religion can be judicially superior in non-secular Muslim states. “If, in Ronald Dworkin’s famous words, a state takes human rights seriously, then it must create a judicial system in which the use of the human rights language is both accepted and efficient.”

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44 Namli, pp. 39.
45 Namli, pp. 42.
46 Namli, pp. 41.
it is important that abstract ideas have a real practical dimension, otherwise they risk being undermined.\textsuperscript{47}

Thirdly, Namli discusses the self-sufficient and non-communicative characteristics that liberalism possesses. The liberalistic background of human rights obstructs its universalizing. The central figure of liberalism is the individual, already here we encounter difficulties since groups and their rights hold substantial importance in other cultures.\textsuperscript{48} A reconstruction is not possible within human rights due to its liberalistic definition, something that minorities with non-liberal backgrounds need that identify a group as the holder of rights.\textsuperscript{49}

The discussion of the non-universality of human rights is important in understanding the implementation problems that human rights faces in non-liberal cultures. Namli notes, “it is a secular ideology – liberalism – that today announces its possession of universal norms.”\textsuperscript{50} This proves to be a very difficult transformation to implement in the Russian context. “There has always existed a distinct school of thought in Russia critical of westernizers’ philosophy, which has argued the necessity for Russia to utilize its own experience of democratic transformation.”\textsuperscript{51} A eurocentric focus on human rights may pose existential questions regarding “Russia’s place in history, international relations, pace of reforms, attitude toward society, Russia’s identity, and finally, tasks for the future.”\textsuperscript{52} What this substance exactly consists of is another thesis, however, it goes to show that the Russian context, its history, culture and view on rationalism, might be an obstacle for foreign aid workers. The foreign aid might be directed in such a way that it is incompatible with Russian definitions or interpretations which would could cause problems in the communication between donor and recipient, thereby lessening coordination and implementation of the intended project.

Cultural relativism may impede foreign aid donors’ coordination. If what Namli has discussed is a factor in the Russian context, Swedish aid donors might have trouble cooperating with Russian organizations. “While the principles of neutrality and impartiality have been put forward by many organizations, the reality of the field has caught up with aid workers: they

\textsuperscript{47} Namli, pp. 46.
\textsuperscript{48} Namli, pp. 53.
\textsuperscript{49} Namli, pp. 53.
\textsuperscript{50} Namli, pp. 79.
often face issues in accessing beneficiaries, protecting people or delivering aid because of the context."53 The lack of contextual proximity has been distinguished as a severe problem in aid.54

While most organizations will agree to encouraging local participation during aid missions, very few foreign organizations consider that they should develop a contextualized strategy. […] They prefer to work with the ‘one-size-fits-all model,’ and take local specificities into account only where the programs do not transform society.55

Anicée Van Engeland discusses problems that foreign aid workers might face in humanitarian situations; however, it can be applied to development aid as well. In order for long-term social, economic and political development to occur, it is vital that proposed projects are entrenched and accepted in recipient society. In the present context of this thesis, there exists a major obstacle in Swedish development aid to Russia in the form of Russian government’s unwillingness to accept human rights aid, a likeness to that of what humanitarian aid workers in other contexts may face. Understanding the context is highly valuable when working with aid, and for that reason, this thesis will investigate and discuss whether the Russian context may be suitable for the type of foreign aid cooperation that Sweden is engaging in, or if it causes complications.

3. Aim and research question

This thesis aims to fill part of the gap on the topic of aid and democracy. Indeed, it is a topic where previous research has treaded scarcely. The topic of the relationship between aid and democracy is one of the more popular, important and defining subjects in the study of democratization. However, the lack of consensus regarding the effectiveness of foreign aid on democracy makes every study vital for understanding whether there is a positive or negative trend between increased resources and the liberalization of society. The missteps of the West in the 1990’s Russia have been thoroughly studied, however not as much is devoted to the difficulties that present-day foreign aid donors face. The 1990’s, is marked with enormous efforts from Western donors, and the lack of effect that the exertions resulted in, are one of the perplexities that has caused the need for investigation. This period in time was marked by a vigorous attempt at liberalization of the Russian society, yet it was not accepted. Traits within human rights activists and Russian society may very well be the reasons behind a disabling of an acceptance of

54 Van Engeland, pp. 171-172.
55 Van Engeland, pp. 173.
liberalism. This thesis aims at analyzing the existence of it through interviews with Swedish donors of a Russian cultural relativism. This thesis aims to uncover what factors there are explaining the obstacles impeding human rights promotion and how these are overcome.

Sarah Henderson, professor in political science, noted quite grimly at the turn of the millennium that Russia has no civil society and posed the question whether a civil society based on aid will be effective today. Given the mixed features scholars attribute aid through civil society, this thesis will touch upon the relationship between civil society and democratization. Aid programs explicitly directed at “strengthening civil society” have become more common. Measuring the human rights effect of Swedish democracy promotion through foreign aid is not the intention of this thesis. However, since working with the Russian civil society is the main approach made by Sweden, this thesis wishes to contribute to this research area by mainly examining the perceived problems and but also the positives, the ways in which complications are solved, between a donor and the recipient which in this case is the civil society. In order to facilitate future human rights promotion anywhere one must understand the problems that persist in a specific context and be able to work around them. Even though Sinikukka Saari stated that it “is difficult to give advice to European organizations at this point, […] Western organizations should not yield to Russia’s demands but rather stand firmly by their values.” The Russian context may not be generalizable to other countries, since all contexts have its own characteristics, but raising such questions may very well contribute to the understanding of working vigorously regarding the implementation of human rights. This thesis aims to contribute to the subject area of how to more effectively implement positive democratic change in a context where it is heavily opposed by the government, specifically in the Russian context, by studying two important theories within foreign aid literature.

The main purpose of this thesis is analyzing the potential problems that Swedish foreign aid donors might experience, through two perspectives that previous literature has identified as instrumental when understanding the topic of foreign aid and democracy promotion. These two

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are a security-based notion, enlightened self-interest, and a potential negative recipient perspective on what the donor wants to promote, specifically cultural relativism. Thus, the research question of this thesis is the following:

To what extent can enlightened self-interest and cultural relativism account for obstacles for Swedish human rights promoters in Russia, and how may they be solved?

An ever-present notion in foreign aid is self-interest. As the guarantors of human rights are solely the states, security is in the interest of the states, as the states’ primary purpose is to give its citizens security. As allocating foreign aid is a political decision, the questions is whether Swedish interests are impeding important work in alleviating the human rights situation in Russia. The security situation is a very important reason in the origins of the Swedish human rights work in Russia, but could it be possible that it hinders the work as well?

Thomas Carothers, a leading expert on international democracy support, notes that some democracy groups and providers have gained more experiences and adept in fostering local ownership. One of this thesis’ primary purposes is to assess whether Swedish foreign aid and democracy promotion has identified a Russian way of working, understanding and receiving human rights aid.\textsuperscript{59} In order for local ownership of foreign aid projects to increase, a project’s underlying goal must be firmly established within the recipient. Since Russian cultural relativism is at a wide scale being promoted by the state, studying whether this understanding has spread to Russian civil society is extremely important as the results would ask questions of foreign aid directed to Russia, but more importantly of whether a Russian acceptance of the universality of human rights is possible. This is especially important from a Swedish perspective due to the nature of Swedish Russian relations.

Disposition

In order to understand the importance of democracy promotion, and how the theories have been identified in other studies, an accumulation of previous literature will follow in chapter four. The fifth chapter covers the methods used in this thesis used to operationalize the theories used, what the empirical data consists of and how the data will be analyzed. The sixth chapter discusses the results that the operationalization of the theories has resulted in when applied to the empirical data. This section is divided into two parts, one discussing the obstacles perceived by Swedish donor’s and the second segment illustrates what the current solutions are. An analysis

\textsuperscript{59} Carothers, Aiding Democracy Abroad, pp. 268.
is made in chapter seven and finally, conclusions and ideas for future research end this thesis in chapter eight.

4. Previous Literature

Foreign aid and its significance in relation to affecting other countries, is a thoroughly studied subject. However, there is no consensus regarding its impacts. The underlying reason for the very existence of foreign aid is to positively affect the recipient country to develop. This thesis focuses on one specific branch of foreign aid: development aid. Within this umbrella term one can find democracy assistance.

Democracy assistance is the provision of support (either financial, cultural, or material) to “democratic agents” in the process of democratization, without entailing direct intervention. It seeks to foster the conditions for the rise of a democratic regime, such as NGOs’ patronage or diplomatic pressure, and is thus, as Thomas Carothers put it, “a quiet support for democracy.”

This form of allocating resources in an external context has been an extremely popular and used foreign policy after World War Two. Its usage has been carried through in very different types of countries with very different cultures, histories and local circumstances that subsequently affect its democratization opportunities. Democracy assistance has developed into an integral component of European and US foreign policy. Especially during the 1990’s was democracy promotion at the forefront of foreign policy. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the 6th Secretary-general of the United Nations said, “liberal democracy is one of the pillars on which a more peaceful, more equitable and more secure world can be built.” Liberal democracy was celebrated to the extent that Francis Fukuyama saw its defeat over communism as the step to a post-ideological world.

Astounding sums have been allocated in order to promote democracy; for example, during the fiscal year of 2017, USAID spent $1.6 billion on Good Governance. A common denominator for the great majority of these projects coming from Europe has been implementing

62 Grimm, pp. 73.
63 Grimm, pp. 73.
Civil and political rights have been the primary focus of such promotion projects, however, social and economic rights are also included in the package. Civil and political right are an intrinsic part of democracy, making democracy promotion, assistance and human rights, immensely closely related. Even though the mutually dependent relationship between democracy and human rights has met certain criticism, civil and political rights, the rights focused on in this thesis, are closely linked to democracy. For instance, David Beetham notes that there is not a human right to democracy, but in order for a state to guarantee human rights, democracy is the best way to secure the enjoyment of the citizens’ rights. “Democracy and human rights […] belong firmly together.” Human rights are an intrinsic part of democracy. Institutions of a representative and accountable government needs to be supplemented with civil and political rights and liberties in order for a democracy to function. At the heart of democracy lies the need of the citizens to voice their opinions, whose undeniable rights are enshrined in different human rights conventions.

Many studies concerning development and human rights aid focuses on allocations made by USAID, the European Union, or comparing the two. While the US development aid has been widely ascribed political motivation behind its allocation, meaning mostly helping political actors such as oppositional groups, thus suitable named oppositional approach. European democracy has been characterized by Carothers, as pursuing a developmental approach.

The developmental approach rests on a broader notion of democracy, one that encompasses concerns about equality and justice and the concept of democratization as a slow, iterative process of change involving an interrelated set of political and socioeconomic developments. It favors democracy aid that pursues incremental, long-term change in a wide range of political and socioeconomic sectors, frequently emphasizing governance and the building of a well-functioning state.

The developmental approach has in the context of Swedish aid to Russia more suitable qualities. It is less confrontational than the oppositional approach, which is beneficial for a country of Sweden’s stature in a country like Russia where a tense and restrictive political situation means a narrower window of opportunity. A sustained engagement and an enduring orientation is essential to this approach as it defines democracy transition as something that yields results in

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66 Barratt, pp. 21.
69 Beetham, pp. 92.
70 Carothers, ‘Democracy Assistance’, pp. 7.
71 Carothers, ‘Democracy Assistance’, pp. 5.
the long-term rather than short-term efforts.\textsuperscript{73} This broader view of democracy produces a larger possibility at identifying useful links between socioeconomic and political reform.\textsuperscript{74} The developmental approach finds added value in development by itself; however, this does not mean that development aid or democracy promotion European countries do not also pursue economic or security interests.\textsuperscript{75}

Despite the positive connotation and comprehensive usage democracy promotion had in the beginning of the 1990’s, a democratic backlash has occurred, causing scholarly attention to focus on what went wrong and how to overcome obstacles. In 2007, Freedom House reported about these worrying trends on a global scale.\textsuperscript{76} In many quantitative studies, foreign aid is usually negatively linked to democratization.\textsuperscript{77} Democracy promotion in general, and especially European democracy promotion appears not to be as effective as intended.\textsuperscript{78} Sonja Grimm describes the European aid’s ineffectiveness as a result of uncoordinated multilateral consensus from the donor’s, neglect of interaction between external and internal actors, and an authoritarian pushing back.\textsuperscript{79}

Literature on how to promote democracy through foreign aid has been modest and over the two past decades, advancing solutions to difficult democracy promotion contexts has come to be recognized as a more significant subject.\textsuperscript{80} Overcoming obstacles are an inherent part of democracy promotion. Carothers notes that the presence of obstacles may not only continue despite experience, but increase, as self-confident authoritarian regimes are pushing back Western democracy promotion and “imitating the forms of democracy while undermining the substance of it.”\textsuperscript{81} A recommendation he makes is to reconceptualize democracy promotion as an interactive and dynamic process where external and domestic forces both dispose instruments to influence reform.\textsuperscript{82} Domestic actors and their preferences need to be taken seriously.\textsuperscript{83} Carothers agrees, simply pushing Russia to follow Western standards will not help much.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{73} Carothers, ‘Democracy Assistance’, pp. 10.
\textsuperscript{74} Carothers, ‘Democracy Assistance’, pp. 10.
\textsuperscript{75} Carothers, ‘Democracy Assistance’, pp. 18.
\textsuperscript{76} Acuto, pp. 462.
\textsuperscript{77} Grimm, pp. 74.
\textsuperscript{78} Grimm, pp. 75.
\textsuperscript{79} Grimm, pp. 74-5
\textsuperscript{81} Carothers, ‘Democracy assistance’, pp. 19.
\textsuperscript{82} Grimm, pp. 79.
\textsuperscript{83} Grimm, pp. 79.
\textsuperscript{84} Carothers, ‘The Backlash Against Democracy Promotion’, pp. 66.
Even though Carothers acknowledges the dissensus of an acceptable norm of operation by external parties, understanding a local context is important not to prompt nationalist sentiments and counterproductive results.\(^{85}\)

Democracy assistance to the state of the former Soviet Union, particularly Russia, has especially interested scholars since development aid’s positive effects were so limited. Carothers stated this regarding Western aid in Russia: “They paint a tragicomic picture of democracy promoters as arrogant fools forcing simplistic schemes onto societies they do not understand, all the while preaching hollow homilies about the wonders of democracy.”\(^{86}\) In his opinion, there were many miscalculations made by the West when rushing into Russia. Inexperience in the region was of central importance, causing the creation of several ill-suited programs and recipient aid-fatigue.\(^{87}\) The shallow understanding the Eastern European and Central Asian societies caused donor’s to inaccurately assess key people, institutions, and reform providers, hence incorrectly allocating money.\(^{88}\) The lack of flexibility is also ascribed by Carothers an important role in the mismanagement of aid.\(^{89}\) The ideas behind the allocation of what the projects should accomplish and how these goals should be reached can differ severely between the donor and the recipient. Once the project is underway, those on the ground frequently find that changes to the plan needs to be made, something that might be very difficult to change from the donors’ perspective.\(^{90}\) “The projects are still designed and implemented to fit the needs, habits, and demands of the funding agencies as much as to fit the local realities.”\(^{91}\) Saari describes the European ineptness on account of similar reasons as Carothers such as the deeply rooted passive political culture, but also contributes with her own insights.\(^{92}\) European unwillingness to confront Russian leadership openly led to the return of Russian exceptionalism, the idea that the Russian state and its people are exceptional.\(^{93}\) Democracy promotion was part of a larger policy in order to secure peace, and hence, self-interest could be seen as a cause to the non-liberalization.\(^{94}\)

As scholars have identified contextual distance as one of the more important ways to work within a milieu, cooperation with civil society organizations have been identified as viable

\(^{86}\) Carothers, Aiding Democracy Abroad, pp. 259.
\(^{87}\) Carothers, Aiding Democracy Abroad, pp. 259-260.
\(^{88}\) Carothers, Aiding Democracy Abroad, pp. 261-262.
\(^{89}\) Carothers, Aiding Democracy Abroad, pp. 262.
\(^{90}\) Carothers, Aiding Democracy Abroad, pp. 263.
\(^{91}\) Carothers, Aiding Democracy Abroad, pp. 270.
\(^{92}\) Saari, pp. 736.
\(^{93}\) Saari, pp. 734-735.
\(^{94}\) Saari, pp. 736
method. One of the major ways that Swedish donors work to promote human rights in Russia is through civil society organizations. Simultaneously, an important theme of previous research examining the effects of external assistance, is the positive prospect that civil society human rights organizations might have on instigating change. Although democracy promotion is still at the vanguard of foreign aid, its effects are still highly debatable. Therefore, it is important to discuss its components and whether it has a possibility to succeed in promoting democracy. In order to facilitate democratic change, the existence and establishment of a political culture is of vital importance.

If the democratic model of the participatory state is to develop […], it will require more than the formal institutions of democracy – universal suffrage, the political party, elective legislature. […] A democratic form of participatory political system requires as well [as] a political culture consistent with it. Gabrial Almond and Sidney Verba hold the civil society to be the bridge between citizens and the state. Contribution to the civil society has been a mainstay of foreign aid strategies for a long time. Carothers notes that “[i]n the political domain, civil society development is now deemed crucial to stimulating the public pressure and participation necessary to force poorly functioning state institutions to become more responsive and accountable.” Keck, Risse and Sikkink have found, albeit in 1998-99, that the effects of human rights organizations on political repression, when joined in a network of transnational activities, work regardless of regime type. “Civil society is the connective tissue that transitional countries need to join the forms of democracy with their intended substance, to ensure that new democratic institutions and processes do not remain hollow boxes and empty rituals.” USAID has put great emphasis on placing aid in civil-advocacy groups. The Swedish International Cooperation Agency (SIDA) provides civil society organizations with case-specific and generic democracy promotion support.

95 Grimm, pp. 74.
99 Carothers, Aiding Democracy Abroad, pp. 248.
100 Acuto, pp. 469.
101 Acuto, pp. 469.
Giving aid to the civil society has also resulted in negative scholarly criticism. Nicholas Spina and Christopher Raymond argue that due to the failure of the post-Soviet countries to establish real democracies, even though they received millions of dollars in aid from Western donors since 1990, other courses of action must be approached. They find that “civil society aid is often ineffective at spurring sustainable organizations with committed constituencies.”

Sarah Henderson furthers this argumentation by examining the specific context of foreign aid given to civil society in Russia. She even claims that there is no civil culture in Russia because foreign aid has resulted in recipients establishing a relationship with their donors instead of with other organizations within Russia, thereby creating a client-patron system instead of a network. These are, according to this thesis, very worrisome results as the Russian context is difficult to handle since working with the civil society is according to literature within the subject area, a real and an efficient way to breach stern regimes.

Despite directing criticism at foreign aid aimed for the Russian civil society, Henderson also notes the positive effects it has had on the Russian women’s movement. Through analyzing interview data from 130 women’s groups and internal documents, she finds that funding has helped women’s rights groups create networks as well as office infrastructure. Nonetheless, she criticizes the relationships that foreign aid causes, as she argues that foreign aid causes a dependency to and a replication of Western civic elite. The ending of her article from 2000 is a question that this thesis will hope to answer: “[a]lthough Western aid continues to be invaluable, is a civil society based on training, workshops, and office equipment ever going to be more than skin deep? Perhaps in twenty years, we will know.” By investigating the ways in which Russian civil society human rights organizations understand and work with their Swedish counterparts, results can be deduced regarding whether this part of society has the potential to be successful.

Another central factor that both directs and impedes democracy promotion are strategical or security-interests. Throughout the Cold War, development assistance was tangibly used to further states, primarily US and the Soviet Union, interests. As mentioned previously in the

102 Spina & Raymond, pp. 891.
105 Henderson, 'Importing civil society', pp 78-79.
theory section, this is one of the more prominent theories used to describe obstacles in development aid. The US and its aid allocation are the state mostly connected to this school of thought. Following the logic of the security-aspect or a realistic view, foreign aid donors generally allocate to security partners irrespective of their human rights records.\(^{107}\) Less than half of the world’s Official Development Assistance goes to the world’s poorest 65 countries, showing that strategic interests saturate aid allocation. In fact, studies have shown that if self-interest would be taken out of the motives behind aid, at least three times the number of people that it helps today can be lifted out of poverty.\(^{108}\) Riddell argues that the self-interest accounts for at least a third of the potential impact due solely to wrong decisions taken by donors.\(^{109}\) Previous literature within this topic have focused mostly on analyzing official speeches and policy documents.\(^{110}\) Since the 1980’s, quantitative texts have typically measured the effects of strategic foreign policy interests on aid allocation or used aid data for illustrative purposes.\(^{111}\) In their book *The securitization of foreign aid*, Stephen Brown and Jörn Grävingholt conclude that while security aspects have actually risen after the Cold War, and more countries are using aid as a form of securing interests and safety.\(^{112}\)

Sweden’s democracy aid to Russia has not received much scholarly attention. Swedish development aid in general however is outstudied. Focus has been on countries where democracy and human rights are in the very beginning of the transition stages. This thesis wishes to explore the specific context of Russia, where there are human rights groups already in place, and cooperation with Sweden is important.\(^{113}\) Lars Ingelstam presents in a thorough report what Sweden’s non-military relationship with Russia looks like. He depicts the multifaceted cooperation between the two countries from a Swedish perspective in *Friendly relations: cooperation and dialogue between Russians and Swedes*. Swedish attempts to alleviate human rights and democracy have decreased as a result of the worsening security situation in its vicinity. The Swedish government has maintained that democracy and human rights was to be prioritized.\(^{114}\)


\(^{108}\) Riddell, pp. 358.

\(^{109}\) Riddell, pp. 358-359.

\(^{110}\) Brown & Grävingholt, pp. 2.

\(^{111}\) Brown & Grävingholt, pp. 8.

\(^{112}\) Brown & Grävingholt, pp. 14.


\(^{114}\) Ingelstam, Lars & Sundman, Viktor, *Friendly relations: cooperation and dialogue between Russians and Swedes*, ML Ingelstam HB, Bromma, 2017, pp. 34.
Despite the criticism that foreign aid through civil society organizations has received, Ingelstam notes that despite the uphill struggle, larger projects and more work should be implemented in Russia.\textsuperscript{115} His extensive research shows that the Russian civil society has great potential in contributing constructive efforts.\textsuperscript{116} Ingelstam’s study, as well as Krister Eduards, Michail Krivonos, Lars Rylander similar report from 2009, also shows that there are a lot of other ways in which cooperation and interaction forms beyond these formal payouts.\textsuperscript{117} These are all very important parts to the sum that is the human rights-promoting mechanism in the Swedish foreign aid. However, his work is only a report, not an in-depth scientific analysis of Swedish foreign aid which emphasizes the need for this thesis.

5. Method and sample selection

Constructivism and qualitative research

The ontological position of this thesis is constructivist. This means that this thesis rests on the presupposition that social categories or phenomena are constructed through social interaction.\textsuperscript{118} Since social interaction is the basis of the being of things, social reality is in a state of constant change and revision.\textsuperscript{119} Due to this stance, the researcher will focus on the perceptions of what individuals think and how that constructs a reality.\textsuperscript{120} This study analyzes the perceived realities of the informants, and thus is the ontological position welcomed in this thesis. The constructivist position also indicates a constant need for research since truth is always fleeting and never truly established.\textsuperscript{121} The researcher can only endeavor to present a portion of a constructed reality that cannot be considered final.\textsuperscript{122} The theories studied in this thesis is therefore not something that is created by themselves, but is the result of a constant interaction between people.\textsuperscript{123}

This study is qualitative in nature. To best analyze perceptions, understandings and experiences, caused and developed by social interaction, a qualitative study is the most applicable

\textsuperscript{115} Ingelstam, pp. 143 and 218.
\textsuperscript{116} Ingelstam, pp. 217.
\textsuperscript{119} Bryman, pp. 37.
\textsuperscript{120} Bryman, pp. 39.
\textsuperscript{121} Bryman, pp. 37.
\textsuperscript{122} Bryman, pp. 37.
\textsuperscript{123} Bryman, pp. 341.
to the research questions as it emphasizes the importance of words, rather than quantifying data. In order to attain these perceptions, qualitative interviews will be performed, due to the desire to attain context specific answers. This study combines major theoretical frameworks derived from previous literature with empirical material. Therefore, it is important to establish how to measure or analyze the notions, as will be shown in the following section.

Operationalization of theoretical concepts

To fully understand and utilize the concepts of enlightened self-interest and cultural relativism, an understanding of how the theories are applicable, or non-applicable, needs to be established. Without the understanding of how a quote from one of the informants was noted and chosen, the external reliability, whether the investigation would result in the same results in similar conditions, might be perceived to be low; without a proper scientific method, the results may seem arbitrary. A coding scheme will have to be established with an indicator-driven approach to selecting relevant quotes and discussions from the interviews. The primary focus of the informant’s answers will be responses to the two theories and how they apply to the informant’s work. This is important to define as the indicators can demonstrate the differences that may be between informants and it gives a consistent method, that will in attempts to recreate this study alleviate the chance of replicability resulting in the thesis’ criterion of reliability to subsequently be high.

Coding involves tying one or more keywords to a text segment to facilitate later identification of the statements made by the thesis. Coding often leads to categorization of indicators. Indicators that are created before the data collecting will be used mainly in the obstacle-creating part of the thesis. Indicators can be formed through the interviews. Through the interviews, the informant’s descriptions, attitudes, their social situations, and behavior, indicators will be formed. The indicators consist of repetitions, specific words, metaphors or analogies and direct references tied to the theories. This means that general discussions about security, a contextual way of working with human rights, or disagreements between donor and recipient,
and also miscellaneous factors to the disruption of the human rights promotion in Russia, is of great relevance. A lack of discussion, or disagreement between interviewer and informant is likewise something that can be noted in the scheme. These categories have been created after reading the answers of the sources numerously and will be presented thematically in the analysis. In a data matrix, example shown below, the categories have been established in the column to the left, with indicators described to the right of the categories, and the column to the right shows the empirical data in the form of quotes given by the informant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Indicator(s)</th>
<th>Empirical data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enlightened self-interest</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural relativism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>[Other identified factors]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Since the study is of a qualitative nature, and the empirical data consists of opinions which means that data is not, contrary to quantitative measurements, black or white, there might be data that does not fall within just one category but several.\(^{133}\) Having an awareness of the fluidity and the multi-interpretive character of the discussions of the ideas in the empirical data is central in order to capture what is meant and in making conclusions from a qualitative data set.\(^{134}\) For example, just because the word security is present does of course not automatically mean that the informant is discussing matters that can be placed within enlightened self-interest. Subtle nuances cannot be captured if this study attempts at creating indicators of the conceptions definitive, instead of sensitive to the multi-faceted implications that different subtleties imply.\(^{135}\)

The indicators that are created before-hand will only be discussing aspects of the two theories analyzed in this essay. Citations pertaining to enlightened self-interest will include indicators such as discussions on or about security, strategical advantages and discussions that there is something to gain. To distinguish when the interviewee is discussing obstacles caused by or not caused by cultural relativism, indicators that include different understandings of different types of rights such as women’s rights or LGBT rights are important. Misunderstandings

\(^{133}\) Bryman, pp. 348.
\(^{134}\) Bryman, pp. 348.
\(^{135}\) Bryman, pp. 348.
between recipient and donor is also of significance since it can indicate difference in understandings and approach to promote human rights.

The reason that pre-established indicators is difficult to create is that previous literature has not, to the best of my knowledge, identified in what ways Swedish human rights promoters are trying to work past the two specific theories included in this thesis. The indicators, that will be presented in the results section, will show what categories of solutions are made. It is therefore difficult to establish indicators before the data collection has been completed and the transcription of the interviews been read. Hence, the indicators have been produced after the interviews. In having a data matrix, I can identify traces of the theories used in thesis in the empirical data.

The informants

In order to get a deeper and a more meaningful insight as to what problems or obstacles arise when working with the promotion of human rights in Russia, and meet the criterion of centrality, this thesis conducted interviews with the persons directly involved in its implementation. A purposive sample technique was used with the intention of finding the most suitable informants or respondents to accommodate for the research question posed. The interviewees are informants, centrally positioned actors or sources, rather than simply being respondents, which can be accommodated with a semi-structured interview. They have been able to provide all-encompassing in-depth answers regarding Russia due to their positions within the organizations but also their personal experience with the country. In order to reach the most valid answer to the research question, it is important to reach the people directly involved in a process. Through interviewing key persons within the Swedish foreign aid process, and organizations working with human rights promotion in Russia, the whole cycle of disbursing money to working in the field is therefore accounted for.

The informants were contacted via e-mail and by telephone regarding a study on obstacles in human rights promotion, and the overcoming of them, in Russia. Employees of the following government bodies have been questioned: Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MfFA), SIDA and the Swedish Institute (SI). Three respondents from the MfFA participated; because of their willingness to remain anonymous, they will be named UD1, UD2, and UD3 for the purposes of this thesis, and the department they work in will not be disclosed. Joanna Kurosz, who is the

136 Kvale, Steinar & Brinkmann, pp. 434.
137 Essaiasson, et al., pp. 261.
coordinator for development cooperation with Russia from SIDA, has participated, along with Judith Black, project leader, and Åsa Lundmark, Head of unit for scholarships and project support, from SI.

To cover the perceptions experienced by Swedish civil society organizations that are donors as well, or organizations that receive funding from the Swedish government bodies to carry out operations in Russia or with Russians, this thesis will include informants from five different organizations whose work in Russia is a major part of their international efforts. The following participated: Inna Bukshtynovich from Civil Rights Defenders (CRD) who is the program officer for Eurasia and the program officer for Eastern Europe at Palmecentret Inga Näslund. A respondent from Swedish International Liberal Center (SILC) and Östgruppen also partook, yet their wish to be anonymous results in them being labeled SILC and Östgruppen.

Semi-structured interviews

The interviews were carried out in a semi-structural nature. The reason for this choice of method is that I wanted to steer the conversation into two specific themes that permeate this thesis, with an accommodating of follow-up questions, but also with some form of structure. In order to find out what problems there are for current Swedish human rights promoters in Russia, the two theories discussed serve as the framework for what questions have been included in the interview guide. The interviews followed a semi-structured guide, whereby questions were asked thematically. The themes were: about the organization, a security-aspect’s influence on human rights promotion, a “Russian” way of working and understanding human rights, comparing the theories, and other factors. All themes included both an aspect of whether the theory was applicable to the situation, to what extent it causes problems, and how to work towards solving that problem. The interviews were not carried out in exactly the same way but were accustomed to each respondent in order to extract discussions relating to the theories.

There are a great number of advantages of this method that are especially relevant to this thesis. Peoples experiences of the world is a hallmark of the semi-structured interview. In order to find out how people perceive the world, or rather their world, the semi-structured interview is appropriate. The researcher is trying to obtain descriptions of the interviewee's perception in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena. The main purpose

139 Bryman, pp. 413.
140 Interview guide can be found in the appendix.
142 Esaiasson, et al., pp. 262.
143 Esaiasson, et al., pp. 262
144 Esaiasson, et al., pp. 262.
of this thesis is to delve into the perceptions of centrally located actors within the Swedish mechanism, this is not possible with other forms of data-intake where natural discussions between interviewer and informant unlock what the interviewee really thinks without a forewarning to prepare a form of standardized answer. With this form of method, the questions don’t have to be asked in a specific order but can come naturally, as well as other questions can be added if the respondent has related to the topic.\textsuperscript{145} In order to potentially support aid-workers future efforts, trying to identify qualities or experiences that might seem invisible to the respondent, is also important.\textsuperscript{146} To circumvent the automatic “official” answers that the informants may give, it is important that the interview has the form of a natural discussion, with a few thematic questions leading the conversation, hence, semi-structured interviews is the most applicable form of data-collection. Therefore, the validity, meaning what the thesis is observing, identifying or measuring what is meant to be measured, is high.\textsuperscript{147} Through using a semi-structured interview where a large degree of natural conversations combined with centrally located actors will give a valuable insight into the Swedish human rights promoters work.

Semi-structured interviews are also relevant when the thesis is serving as a complement to other research.\textsuperscript{148} There is already a lot of established previous literature regarding this subject area in general, therefore this thesis will contribute to existing literature, but also add to the area by describing a specific context and asking whether established theories also hold up today, in the country of Russia. There is not a standardized number of respondents that are needed for results to be valid, which is a positive trait for this thesis because as experienced, employees in this line of business are very busy.\textsuperscript{149}

All informants were notified of what the thesis’ purpose is, asked whether it was acceptable for me as the interviewer to record the interview, and whether they would prefer being referred to as anonymous and their answers would be handled with confidentiality, fulfilling the ethical criteria for conducting research interviews.\textsuperscript{150}

After the transcription of the interviews has been completed, and the informants who wished to see the text had approved it, the analysis method of meaning interpretation has been

\textsuperscript{145} Bryman, pp. 415.
\textsuperscript{146} Esaiasson, et al., pp. 263.
\textsuperscript{147} Bryman, pp. 352.
\textsuperscript{148} Esaiasson, et al., pp. 266.
\textsuperscript{149} Esaiasson, et al., pp. 270.
\textsuperscript{150} Kvale & Brinkmann, pp. 105-110.
utilized. This method allows the researcher to take the step beyond the expressed to develop structures, relationships and understandings that do not appear immediately in a text.\textsuperscript{152}

The interviews were performed in Swedish, save one with CRD, and all quotes from the other organizations in this thesis are my own translations. The interviews took place in Stockholm, Sweden, between March 22, 2019 to April 25, 2019 with an average length of 37 minutes. All 10 interviews were recorded and transcribed save one since the informant did not wish to be recorded.

**Methodological and source critique**

Instead of performing interviews, one could have analyzed documents and correspondence between donor and recipient. It is very much possible that if another method was chosen, other conclusions could have been reached. However, since human rights are a sensitive area when working not only with Russia but with all states with an authoritarian pushback, such material is impossible to receive and analyze. Also, analyzing documents and correspondence will not necessarily lead to an understanding of the desk-officers’ perceptions, in fact, interviews are an even better way to find out what people think regarding the human rights aid. As not being a part of the organizations, the semi-structured interviews are therefore the best way to partake in perceptions.

It is difficult to make broad generalizations based on 10 interviews from both governmental authorities and civil society organizations, and this thesis will not attempt at making such statements. The results of this essay may not be observed as characteristics or results that pertain to the whole MfFA nor all Swedish organizations, however, if certain opinions exist, it is a result by itself. If these opinions exist, then the theories are worth further research. Yet, it should be noted, if the number of informants or respondents increased, the applicability of the theories could differ greatly. If the theories are in this thesis minutely applicable due to only one or two informants sharing the belief that for instance security is a great matter when it comes to human rights aid, then depending on who or what organization a future thesis interviews, the response might shift overwhelmingly to security being a great issue. This has not been taken into consideration when making the strategic choice of organizations since they are not outspoken when it comes to their stance with these theories applicability in Russia.

\textsuperscript{151} Kvale & Brinkmann, pp. 249, swe: meningstolkning.
\textsuperscript{152} Kvale & Brinkmann, pp. 249.
6. Results

Obstacles in human rights promotion

Codification examples

Due to spatial limits, only a small portion of the data collection and codification will be included in this section. What follows are examples taken from the transcription of the interviews in order to show how excerpts from the raw data consisting of the informant’s answers were chosen, and the indicators specify why they are used. The two theories are included first, and then other factors that are identified as obstacle-creating are included. Again, due to spatial limits, results pertaining to the two theories chosen for the thesis will be discussed, but also the state-led oppression that seems to be the greatest incumber.

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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural relativism</td>
<td>CRD</td>
<td>LGBT rights</td>
<td>It is a difficult question because our western perspective might not be correct especially when working with north Caucasus, and in the rest of Russia. I’m sure you cannot have a simple look. What we deem are universal human rights are the UDHR, but you cannot work straightforward with LGBT-rights. Nobody would work with these rights, at least not that I know of, because it is a very sensitive taboo topic so people would ignore it. (pp. 22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlightened self-interest</td>
<td>SILC</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>You mean security situation, geopolitical security situation? No, we work with people in Russia who want to defend their rights and that is what we work with. We do not work with foreign policy. We are working on domestic policy and human rights in other countries. (pp. 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-led oppression</td>
<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Bureaucratic obstacles</td>
<td>Organizations often work in an environment where much of their time, especially if they are already labeled as foreign agent, needs to be put on different types of reporting, it is very easy to make mistakes or to get punished. There are many bureaucratic obstacles. It is clear that Sweden’s support is very important, and Sweden is one of the largest donors in the EU. However, Russia is a huge country, so the need is immense. (pp. 38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with organiza-</td>
<td>UD3</td>
<td>Limitations within the organization’s aid structure</td>
<td>It is clear that this is a limitation when it comes to grants. But it is not specific to this, it is with all contributions. Then you have to follow the rules. It is nothing out of the ordinary, but it is an organization that is limited. If we talk about the contributions we give, they are small. This means that the administration is even more burdensome because you still have to do all the work. It is limiting. (pp. 46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>SI: Åsa Lundmark</td>
<td>Russian image in Sweden</td>
<td>I would put it like this that the picture of Russia in Sweden is certainly a bigger obstacle because there are doubts in Swedish environments. (pp. 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cultural relativism

The effects of the unique Russian history and culture could potentially have an adverse effect when traditionally Western ideas are brought on to the scene. As discussed in the theoretical section of this thesis, a different understanding of what is needed in order to facilitate the individual’s decent living may be interpreted differently depending on the context. Understanding
the context is a significant key in order for human rights promotion to have a positive effect. When asked questions regarding the differences between the donor organization and recipient locals, the answers of the informants were staggeringly similar; yet, the indirect discussions regarding the context show that there is some form of difference that expresses a Russian form of understanding human rights, or prioritizing differently than the Swedish counterparts.

The informants view the Russian civil society organizations that they work with as like-minded when it comes to understanding and working with human rights. Judith Black from Svenska Institutet says “I only come into contact with Russian partners who already have bought the idea of the Swedish way. No one has forced the Russian organizations to cooperate […] It is very much a meeting of like-minded.”153 There is an understanding that human rights are universal, both from the donor and recipient. The informant from Sida was very clear on the subject of the human rights’ universality. She says that:

Human rights are universal, and it is upon those principles that we base our work. […] These are principles that most people in the world have agreed upon. This is the starting point for there being a mandate to work with these issues internationally. However, it is clear that the Russian government today has a different view of rights at all. In some cases, one wants to depict human rights as something Western, but that is much of what Russian organizations work against in their country.154

The informant from Östgruppen agrees wholeheartedly with the opinion that human rights are universal. When asked the question whether there exists a Russian understanding of what human rights are, they answered:

No. I am a very strong advocate of looking at this universal perspective of human rights and rejecting the more cultural relativist approach. As I see it, it is a way of trying to escape human rights. It is then said that these are European values, and that we have another way of thinking. Therefore, it is also unfortunate when the EU sometimes or the United States, speak in those terms, and that it is important to promote European values. I say it is not at all important to promote these values because they are universal. If you start labeling them as European, then you also open for this alternative explanation model. If you look a little deeper at that, it has become some kind of stereotypical view of the whole thing, that it is about European values, highlighting precisely the applicable pieces of the European tradition, and perhaps highlight authoritarian traits in other cultures. If you look a bit historically, there are plenty of examples of both of these cultures. Amartya Sen writes a lot about these particular issues. […] This is an explanation that authoritarian leaders are happy to embrace and spread. It is because they themselves do not want to expose themselves to losing power.155

This interpretation of what human rights are, and how different peoples use them, shows that there exists a consensus between Russian and Swedish organizations, which in theory should

153 Judith Black, Svenska Institutet, interviewed by David Benthe, March 22, 2019, pp. 5
154 Joanna Kurosz, Styrelsen för internationellt utvecklingssamarbete, interviewed by David Benthe, April 23, 2019, pp. 36
155 Östgruppen, interviewed by David Benthe, April 25, 2019, pp. 42
facilitate human rights promotion. The informant from SILC was also very clear on their opinion regarding different understandings of human rights. “I do not think at all that there are different ways of understanding human rights. If someone gets their rights violated in a clear way then people see it, regardless of culture, and think it is wrong.”[156]

Inna Bukhtynovich from CRD breaks the norm of the answers of the informants in this thesis. This is mainly due to the organization she works with focuses on the North Caucasus region which, unlike North Western Russia, is predominantly Muslim, and therefore poses many kinds of obstacles that the others informants seldom face. When working towards women’s rights, discrepancies flare up. However, these opinions do not exist only between donor and recipient but within the population itself. Inna describes that women in the region say that they don’t have problems with women’s rights.[157] The rights of the LGBT-community is very controversial, it is even a taboo topic that is ignored not only at a local level, but also by human rights organizations since involvement may result in physical consequences.[158] Some human rights organizations in the area do not consider women’s rights to be a priority, both to work with and how to work, meaning that organizations previously consisted mostly of men and focused more on resolving torture cases. However, LGBT-rights and women’s rights have been and remain a central part of Swedish foreign politics and saturates its foreign aid. Inna Bukhtynovich says that “I am sure that lots of Russian organizations think that Swedish organizations are crazy about highlighting gender. We get support from Sida and it is a requirement from them to discuss gender issues.”[159] Coming from Belarus, she can on a personal level note the differences between the cultures:

[Person]Personally I did not understand the focus on gender issues, I thought it was an exaggeration of the problem. Then you learn that you didn’t think about these things, I have previously worked with human rights and democracy, but it took me some years to think within these terms. I guess that it’s the same for the human rights defenders in Russia that it takes time to understand. […] They will say: “you Swedes are strange, when we talk about torture why is it about gender?”[160]

Despite Inga Näslund from Palmecentret giving this thesis a clear answer on the Russian civil society organizations’ agreeing on the universality of human rights, there are subjects that are less favored in Russia.[161] Again, the rights of the LGBT-community are a very controversial subject, not only in Northern Caucasus, but also in North Western Russia. The organizations

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[156] SILC, Svenskt internationellt liberalt center, interviewed by David Benthe, April 1, 2019, pp. 14.
[157] Inna Bukhtynovich, Civil Rights Defenders, interviewed by David Benthe, April 5, 2019, pp. 22.
[158] Inna Bukhtynovich, Civil Rights Defenders, pp. 22.
[159] Inna Bukhtynovich, Civil Rights Defenders, pp. 23.
[160] Inna Bukhtynovich, Civil Rights Defenders, pp. 23.
[161] Inga Näslund, Palmecentret, interviewed by David Benthe, April 8, 2019, pp. 30
that she works with not only face threats from higher authorities, but also deem the subject area controversial.\textsuperscript{162} Although the latter may be a form of avoiding repercussions from the authorities, it can simply be a result of differing understandings regarding the rights of non-heterosexuals. It should be said that Inga Näslund does not generalize this to all the organizations she works with but highlights that diversity of opinions exists.\textsuperscript{163}

There exists a disagreement between the informants when asked if there is a difference between the understandings of human rights civil society organizations and the common Russian. Even though the primary objective of this thesis is not to root out the origins of Russian cultural relativism, it is important to include this discussion and opinions regarding this matter because it can reveal whether the common Russian understands human rights in their own way or whether this is based on a state-led phenomenon. The informant from Sida replied that there absolutely is a difference between the various circles of society, yet does not go deeper in reflecting as to how this has emerged.\textsuperscript{164} Inna Bukshtynovich reasons that there is a lack of understanding and education which has led to the human rights issue to be given less attention than needed.\textsuperscript{165} The informants note first and foremost the issue of the state-owned televised propaganda which negatively depicts LGBT-rights, women’s rights, and feminism, as something that contradicts Russian values.\textsuperscript{166} The Russian state promotes collective rights and family-values that are incongruent with its Western counterparts.\textsuperscript{167} The informant from Östgruppen notes that:

\begin{quote}
The problem with the situation in Russia is that the societal debates are so controlled, not least because of state-controlled media and television that is still the dominant medium that shapes people’s world view. It is through these that the regime can pump out whatever they want and at the same time try to suppress all kinds of protests that try to show another picture. So, in that sense they have succeeded in Russia to shape people’s world view so in this way there is a great discrepancy.\textsuperscript{168}
\end{quote}

It is difficult in this thesis to conclude whether the Russian society has by itself developed some of the hallmarks of the Russian exceptionalism such as traditional family values and “strong leader” support or whether this is something strengthened by Russian propaganda. This is not the purpose of this thesis, but this discussion does contribute to an understanding whether it exists, and whether it can cause problems for human rights promoters.

\textsuperscript{162} Inga Näslund, Palmecentret, pp. 30.
\textsuperscript{163} Inga Näslund, Palmecentret, pp. 30.
\textsuperscript{164} Joanna Kurosz, Sida, pp. 37.
\textsuperscript{165} Inna Bukshtynovich, Civil Rights Defenders, pp. 23
\textsuperscript{166} Inga Näslund, Palmecentret, pp. 31.
\textsuperscript{167} Joanna Kurosz, Sida, pp. 36.
\textsuperscript{168} Östgruppen, pp. 42.
The perception of like-mindedness exists among the informants. Out of the 36 quotes found in the transcription of the interviews relating to the subject of cultural relativism, 11 deal with the like-mindedness of Russian civil society organizations. However, state-led propaganda and oppression is a slightly more important subject when discussing the reasons for Russian’s discrepancies as it was displayed in 12 quotes.

The relationship between the Russian state-led and state-owned media being a part of the Russian cultural is unclear. On one hand, state-led propaganda can be seen as a power-keeping mechanism, on the other hand, and to a very high degree, people influence the national discourse. When UD1 was asked about this, they answered:

Is it Putin who understands what the Russian people really want or is he shaping what he wants? It is clear that if we look at him, to the extent that one can rely on how opinion polls show how his popularity was never as large as when he illegally annexed Crimea, then one must say that it seems to be an interaction and has a pretty good understanding of what the common folk think. He has, he has always had, a message that is well received in society, but to believe that Russia had developed in the same way under another leader with a different agenda ... I do not buy that Russian soul needs a leader like Vladimir Putin.  

They go on to say that this view of Russia, a country that cannot be measured like other countries, is something that has even spread to other countries’ journalists. Western journalists have for example tried to legitimize the annexation of Crimea by describing it as something that the West understands. The important note here is that UD1 makes a clear distinction between the state and the people. Polls have shown that the common Russian does not consider democracy to be important, yet when asking deeper questions of rights, the results are very different and in favor of democracy. They also ascribe the power of the television as great, that:

[People are not more complicated than that. If one hears a message time and time again, that the message is formulated and confirmed by people with authority and also manages to suspect those who come with a different perspective, it has great effect and that is why the steering of the message is so important to the regime.]

Inga Näslund from Palmecentret adds to this by stating that “TV has a huge impact in Russia, especially for some age groups, some of the people who understand and think that this [propaganda] is not the truth, but unfortunately there are those who believe in it.

State-led propaganda has, according to the informants, even been successful in changing positive connotations of individual words that otherwise might have a decent undertone have been used to express negative experiences. According to the informant from Östgruppen, the

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169 UD1, Utrikesdepartementet, interviewed by David Benthe, April 3, 2019, pp. 17.
170 UD1, Utrikesdepartementet, pp. 17.
171 Östgruppen, pp. 42.
172 Östgruppen, pp. 42-43.
173 Inga Näslund, Palmecentret, pp. 30.
The word democracy has been turned into a form of swear word, and Inga Näslund from Palmecentret describes the Russian word for influence as something extremely negative.

Concludingly, generally, the informants agree that the Russian civil society organizations that they work with, or are in contact with, do not understand human rights in a different way. There may be a deprioritizing of LGBT-rights and women’s rights, yet this is due to state-led oppression, and the relationship between donor and recipient is very much characterized by a compatible vision on human rights. If there are any discrepancies, Swedish donors attribute them as fruits of the Russian propaganda mechanism.

Enlightened self-interest

Previous literature has described aid to Russia and the former Soviet Union as very much influenced by realistic ideals and motivations. Swedish aid in general has moved towards such standards as well. However, many of the informants would strongly disagree that this reasoning is a part of the Swedish agenda. According to most of the informants, security is a very small part, or not even a part but an indirect effect of the Swedish aid work according to many of the informants. It is described as a very beneficial secondary effect but not a leading motive for the allocation of resources.

The informants do identify an increased commitment as something that would serve Swedish security interests, but when allocating aid in Russia, security is not one of the reasons for its distribution. The informants from the MfFA clearly state that there is a positive security aspect of this specific aid.

Absolutely, a commitment towards Russia strengthens our own security. Stability is a difficult concept, but if one says: a development in Russia towards a more stable and more democratic state or a more stable democracy, one can also say that lies unambiguously in our interest. Then I think that one should perhaps note that Sweden is also working with democracy and human rights even in those parts of the world where we cannot at all see any direct security gains. In the case of Russia, I would absolutely say that this is an effect, but it is not necessary for Sweden to support democracy and human rights in countries where we, or our security interests, will never have to be threatened. It is also a matter of values. But in this case, one can of course note that it has a safety-enhancing effect. I am convinced that the Baltic Sea Region is considerably more stable as the Baltic states democratize. To the extent that we helped with this, it shows that we have something to gain from it.

All three of the informants from the MfFA were unanimous that security-reasons are not part of the reason why aid is located to Russian human rights organizations. UD2 answered that the more democracy and human rights is respected in Sweden’s vicinity, the better. Not only

174 Östgruppen, pp. 42.
175 Inga Näslund, Palmecentret, pp. 30; ги: влияние.
176 UD1, Utrikesdepartementet, pp. 16.
would the security situation be ameliorated but also many other social aspects.\textsuperscript{177} Joanna Kurosz from Sida does infer that there is an established link between human rights and security made by international conventions, yet agrees that during the stages that her organization comes into contact with a Russia counterpart, security is not a factor that is considered at all.\textsuperscript{178} UD3 went even further, when asked what they thought about security and its potential difficulties, they stated:

But now you say security-thinking again, I do not accept it. I do not accept that link. There is no connection between that and the policy behind our support. It is not dependent solely on a Swedish political security reason, I think you’re using the wrong word. It is clear that it is in Sweden’s interest to have good relations with Russia even from a security perspective. But we cannot use that word as a definition for why we give this support. It is much wider than that. It lies in our business promotion, cultural promotion, it is in our exchanges of various kinds, that we have good relations with Russia. Human rights are a part, but not the only one.\textsuperscript{179}

This answer would make it seem that security is not a part of Swedish human rights aid at all, that it is for purely altruistic reasons that Sweden promotes human rights elsewhere.

When moving on from governmental organizations to the human rights organizations included in this thesis, the answers regarding enlightened self-interest’s non-applicability in the Swedish aid to Russia context remains almost the same. Inna Bukshtynovich agrees completely with the positive side effect that human rights promotion has on the security situation, yet security was not present ideologically within the organization mission plan.\textsuperscript{180} While concluding that the respect for human rights and the amelioration of democracy in Russia would greatly benefit Sweden in many forms, security was not and is not a factor. The informant at SILC did not even consider their work from an external context to promote human rights in another to be a part of the Swedish foreign policy. “You mean security situation, geopolitical security situation? No, we work with people in Russia who want to defend their rights and that is what we work with. We do not work with foreign policy. We are working on domestic policy and human rights in other countries.”\textsuperscript{181} Human rights promotion according to them is not part of a broader security or foreign policy. It is interesting to note that while the civil society organizations included in this thesis are not state-owned, they do receive funding from Sida, which is government agency of the Swedish foreign ministry, and other aid-giving bodies who have a broader foreign policy mission to pursue.

\textsuperscript{177} UD2, Utrikesdepartementet, pp. 34.
\textsuperscript{178} Joanna Kurosz, Sida, pp. 36.
\textsuperscript{179} UD3, Utrikesdepartementet, pp. 46.
\textsuperscript{180} Inna Bukshtynovich, Civil Rights Defenders, pp. 25.
\textsuperscript{181} SILC, pp. 10.
Despite the unanimity in the opinion of the exclusion of the security aspect in Swedish foreign aid to Russia, one informant remains certain of its importance between the two countries.

It is very much about it being one of our profile issues just as we see the human rights work, not least in Russia, as relevant through a security perspective. [...] I think that is an important factor. [...] This particular aspect of security has perhaps been more pronounced now in recent years with this Social Democratic and Green party government because Margot Wallström has talked more about human security in a slightly broader perspective than just the military and defense perspective. [...] This is what I mean by having a small niche with our perspective; the Swedish-Russian discussion is very focused on military threats, then often linked to defense capacity as a means of resisting a potentially military threat, while we often highlight this second aspect of the potential military threat that is largely dependent on democracy and the human rights situation in the country.182

The informant from Östgruppen is convinced of the human rights promotion will both improve the democratic situation in the country, but most importantly, it will lessen the security tension that today exists between Sweden and Russia. They go on to say that less should be spent on various military preparations, and more on improving democracy and respect for human rights. This is a clear and unambiguous connection between security and human rights promotion.

While the informant from Östgruppen says that they often experience support in this opinion, this belief is not shared by the other nine informants of this thesis. Out of the 18 quotes from the interviews pertaining to enlightened self-interest, 15 described Swedish aid to Russia as without a security aspect and that it was a positive side-effect. Since there is an evident divergent perception regarding the security aspect of human rights promotion, it is not reasonable to fully dispel this feature. Neither is reasonable to conclude that it is a dominant perception since it is only one opinion that deviates with the informants used. We can however say that such opinions exist, yet this thesis can with the informants used conclude that security is not a dominant aspect when coming to Swedish aid to Russia. Thus, security is only an acceptable side-effect. However, as will be shown in the section discussing how Swedish foreign aid workers perceive as work that will overcome the obstacles, the theories are addressed in the continuous work.

The state-led suppression

The informants included in this thesis have identified the Russian state-led suppression of foreign influence on human rights promoters in Russia as the primary obstacle. This category has in this thesis been identified as something independent from cultural relativism. The attack on

182 Östgruppen, pp. 40.
the democratic space for civil society organizations to work in has resulted in grievous consequences for human rights promoters, both for internal actors and for external donors. Foreign organizations may find it difficult to travel to Russia.\(^{183}\)

What we hear sometimes is the issue of the agent law and other things that are very risky for the Russian democracy movement. Firstly, there are donors who withdraw completely in order not to provoke the Russian regime or because they do not want to jeopardize the democracy movement because they do not want to expose them to risk, in order to have negative consequences. It is very unfortunate; I know that the reasoning seems to be that you risk not supporting those who would really need it from some kind of supposed benevolence. It is a fact that one understands that they really are in a risk situation, but it is clear that these risks do mean that this kind of support is more complicated and more difficult practically.\(^{184}\)

Transferring of resources cannot be done because it forces the recipient organization to brand themselves as foreign agents which comes with a lot of negative publicity and negative connotations.\(^{185}\) Even though powering through the agent law is an option, it comes with bureaucratic difficulties.\(^{186}\) In many of the connections that the informants have, organizations have chosen to “fly under the radar” and some even shut down their business.\(^{187}\) As soon as organizations work towards political rights, operations become much more difficult.\(^{188}\) Inga Näslund from Palmecentret, who has been working in and with Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union, finds the shrinking democratic space especially difficult. She finds the development of the difficulties in moving currency, to be moving backwards, and being the most important problem.\(^{189}\) Sponsoring Russian civil society organizations money-wise is not possible, the only way to improve the situation is by inviting the Russian human rights promoters to Sweden.

The other organizations included in this thesis also deem the governmentally created obstacle to be the heftiest impediment. Even though the promoters at Östgruppen are used to state-led oppression, the informant finds that effect that the various laws hostile toward foreign influence are especially tangible in Russia. Despite the local engagement that the rights movement generates in Russia, it does in fact create a general hostility towards human rights promoters from the public.\(^{190}\) The shrinking democratic space is enforced not only by the government but also the community.

\(^{183}\) Inna Bukshynovich, Civil Rights Defenders, pp. 26.
\(^{184}\) Östgruppen, pp. 41.
\(^{185}\) Åsa Lundmark, Svenska Institutet, pp. 1.
\(^{186}\) Joanna Kurosz, Sida, pp. 38.
\(^{187}\) Inga Näslund, Palmecentret, pp. 29.
\(^{188}\) Åsa Lundmark, Svenska Institutet, pp. 3.
\(^{189}\) Inga Näslund, Palmecentret, pp. 33.
\(^{190}\) Östgruppen, pp. 38-39.
The complexity of the Russian state-led suppression leads to multifaceted problems. When asked whether the Russian context was different than other countries that they have worked with, informants answered that the state-led suppression includes many different stakeholders. Due to this supposed division of power, many different explanations are found when consequences hit human rights promoters.

Comparing, for example, to Belarus, which, on the one hand, may seem similar to Russia with the authoritarian rule. It is in a way more straightforward to work against Belarus, it is easier to understand who decides and how the system is controlled. In Russia there are so many different factors that play out. There is a political control from the regime. We know that there are various formation forms in the state apparatus; there are strong financial interests, there was strong organized crime in the 1990’s that somehow grew into the state apparatus. There are usually several alternative explanations for why things happen. It is quite evident when it comes to unresolved murder of regime critics, there may be a Chechnya track, and there is a trace of corruption. We have a corruption in Russia that is very difficult to penetrate. There may be different power bases within the state apparatus that sometimes fight each other. It is hard to know about it.¹⁹¹

It seems that the agent law does of course pose a serious obstacle to human rights promoters in Russia, however, it is the informal political power battles within Russian politics that causes uncertainty as to how consequences will be distributed, and for what actions.¹⁹²

The authoritarian pushback is experienced as the biggest difficulty by the Swedish foreign aid donors included in this thesis, as it leads to many different types of administrative obstacles as well as brandishes the Russian human rights organization as something not wanted in Russia. The Russian propaganda mechanism is discussed often by the informants as a large problem as it turns the people against the work they are doing, therefore they focus attention how to counteract this, as will be discussed in the following section.

Overcoming obstacles

Codification examples

Since enlightened self-interest, or the security aspect, does not seem to be causing the donor’s problems, or even something that Swedish donors have in mind when giving aid, there are no indicators which suggest the ways in which donor’s overcome obstacles created by this theory. Here are some examples of the codifications made. The categories will be further described in the subsequent sections.

¹⁹¹ Östgruppen, pp. 43.
¹⁹² Östgruppen, pp. 43.
### Competence of human rights organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Indicator(s)</th>
<th>Empirical data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competence of human rights</td>
<td>CRD</td>
<td>Dialogue; competence building; civil society</td>
<td>When it comes to how we work is the dialogue we have with the human rights defenders. How they see things, what they want. Some organizations have decided not to receive foreign funding, just to work as volunteers, for some its possible. Yes, listen to what they say and if they want to take risks, they know the situation. (pp. 22)</td>
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<tr>
<td>organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td>organizations’ knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universality of human rights</td>
<td>UD3</td>
<td>Not a unique context</td>
<td>But it [Russia] is not unique. It is probably as difficult to work with human rights in China or any other large country that is authoritarian. (pp. 47)</td>
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<tr>
<td>promotion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People-to-people contacts</td>
<td>Palmecentrett</td>
<td>Spreading of ideas</td>
<td>If one considers that people-to-people contacts contribute to openness and inflow of new ideas and such, then there are many areas where you do not perceive any major problems with exchanges and collaborations and so on. (pp. 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force of mediating</td>
<td>Östgruppen</td>
<td>Spreading information</td>
<td>We try to make it work for them, because we see that it fulfills a very important function for them to have an intermediary voice here, so to speak, that can help spread their issues. Sometimes it can be a risk moment for them to pursue very sensitive issues internationally, and then we can strengthen that work. It then leads to a feedback so to speak. (pp. 39)</td>
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### Raising competence of the partner organizations

Despite cultural relativism not being a main obstacle perceived by the Swedish foreign aid donors, a major attempt at improving the context’s understanding of human rights is being done. The informants agree almost unanimously that the Russian counterparts are aware of what universal human rights are, and how the donors would like to see them promoted in Russia. Swedish organizations, collectively, view Russian human rights promoters as very competent.

It has changed a lot during these years, the LGBT-movement in Russia has grown from nothing to being some of the strongest voices in the human rights world. This oppression is at the same time perhaps the most well-known type of oppression in Sweden regarding human rights in Russia. The whole dynamic, organizations that have grown, become more eloquent, able to argue for their cause, they have become the first ones the government has attacked in the human rights world, and it has spread. It has created a solidarity between various human rights activists.193

The Russian context has often been described as a situation where the human rights organizations are in place, there are networks available, different types of human rights defenders are ready to pounce at the nearest chance given. Not only do the Russian organizations know more about their own context better, they know more about their own competence and how far they can reach. This is where the Swedish donors deem themselves as important, they can help these organizations develop.

When asked whether the Russian organizations knew of and were prepared for the various risks they might encounter, the informant from Sida replied:

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193 Joanna Kurosz, Sida, pp. 36.
Yes, they have a good understanding of their context and I think that the risks during the time that I have worked with human rights in Russia have improved significantly, in any case among those I have had some kind of contact with. I remember the first North Caucasus conference we organized when I worked at CRD 2009, we had a safety training and leading representatives of Russian human rights organizations sat there saying "Yeah yeah, risks, if you decide to join then you’ll have to take the risks, there is no talk about the matter," while now there is a completely different analysis because they discuss much more what risks it is you take and do not take.\footnote{Joanna Kurosz, Sida, pp. 37.}

One of the most important ways that Swedish donors work towards human rights in Russia is through enhancing these groups’ capability in promoting human rights. As financing is practically almost impossible as a result of the foreign agent law, capacity building and development are incredibly essential tools used by Swedish foreign aid donors. Since there are many capable change instigators in place in Russia, the Swedish donors give these actors a chance to enhance their knowledge in human rights and the way that the respect for human rights can be augmented in a society. “There are the possibilities of support for study trips, courses, or smaller selective measures. Then, support can be given to organizations that have better knowledge of the landscape and can direct that support in the best possible way.”\footnote{UD1, Utrikesdepartementet, pp. 15.} It is important to note that Swedish donors do not think themselves as more knowledgeable about the Russian context. It is through the empowerment of the Russians that change will come. UD2 said that it is impossible for them to sit in Stockholm and know more about the context, that the civil society organizations have a “very good feel for these things.”\footnote{UD2, Utrikesdepartementet, pp. 34.} To reduce risk, work lawfully in Russia, and to promote human rights, donors encourage and practically work with enhancing Russian actors’ capability to instigate change.

Raising the competence of the recipient also entails certain characteristics within the donor in order for a greater respect for human rights to be promoted in Russia. With the aim of accommodating the constant waylaying that Russian civil society organizations face, flexibility is a trait that the donor’s value within themselves. Even though the informants were not asked about what characteristics they think that a donor working with the Russian context should have, they answered the flexibility is important as a means of working. Within the term of flexibility lies the principle of constant dialogue with the partner organization.

Flexibility is important as well as dialogue not only with the human rights defenders but with international partners as well. It is much more difficult to work with Russia, but it’s still possible. It’s of course a lot of extra work for us, it’s hard to explain what exactly but for Russian organizations you need to go through a lot of inspections. The situation varies from organization to organization. Some organizations or
partners would want to receive more training. For instance, what we did with consultation we made arrangements to discuss how to fundraise yourself. So, some things you can do within Russia yourself.¹⁹⁷

This is of course a basic feature between donor and recipient, however, since the context is complex, the donors find this attribute of central importance. Inna Bukshtynovich from Civil Rights Defenders states that the partner organizations are good judges of their own situations, however, things do not always go as planned. In order to accommodate for the competent partners in Russia, the flexibility of a Swedish donor is important.

People-to-people contacts

A way that Swedish donors indirectly address the theoretical problem of Russian cultural relativism is through people-to-people contacts. Since the state-led oppression seriously undermines human rights promotion by influencing the people, Swedish donors wish to encourage Russians to see and work with Swedes. It contributes to the inflow of new ideas whereas the respect for human rights is one of them. Sweden has a twofold approach to Russia, one being the sanctions that it and the EU has put on Russia due to the events in Eastern Ukraine, but also one where the connections and contacts between the peoples, meaning actors in different societal strata are given the opportunity to exchange ideas, contacts and a general view of the conduct of business in the different contexts. It is even considered to be an even more effective approach by the informants of the MfFA.

It [civil society organizations] probably fulfills an important function, but I do not think we should overestimate its reach. It is still super important, but I think that broadening the people-to-people contacts makes at least as much benefit without the same programmatic signatures. You ask how we should work with this, I would prefer that as many Russians as possible got to Stockholm or why not other parts of Sweden, from Karelia to Umeå or Murmansk to Luleå, so they themselves decide if this society seems to work. If the propaganda mechanism shows a skewed picture of Sweden, then it is better to come here. If you don't think it feels viable or like a model that works, or that you get annoyed by what you see after a week, then no one forces you to accept it. I think you would have a lot to gain from it. I have no illusions that the prejudices in Russia against Sweden would in any way be less than those we have against Russia. [...]. I think that it would give at least as much. Not on legislation but on currents of ideas in society.¹⁹⁸

UD2 agrees with this stance, a broadening of exchanges and people-to-people contacts are a significant, if not the most important, tools used in order to promote human rights in Russia.¹⁹⁹

UD3 did not consider one to be more important than the other, they said that a combination of both of the people-to-people contacts and the capacity building aspect are important for a full

¹⁹⁷ Inna Bukshtynovich, Civil Rights Defenders, pp. 22.
¹⁹⁸ UD1, Utrikesdepartementet, pp. 19.
¹⁹⁹ UD2, Utrikesdepartementet, pp. 34.
reach. Here it is especially apparent that the Swedish donors do not only want to enhance the part of the Russian society that works professionally with human rights questions, but aspire to influence with currents of ideas within society that are not necessarily tied to the human rights movement, but are very much capable of influencing the Russian context, and thereby instigating a real possibility of a bottom-up change.

The universality of human rights promotion

Despite the Russian context having its own unique history and culture and it being difficult to work within, the Swedish donors do not experience the human rights promotion as being different from other contexts. This is a positive finding because the extremely negative human rights records depict the situation as extremely dreadful. The Swedish donors do not agree that cultural relativism or the idea of a security perspective hamper the human rights work. It is mostly the governmental repression that is seen as the great obstacle. Consequently, the Russian context is not very different from other contexts and is easier to work within than expected by this thesis.

I can see that lots of things repeat. When taking a human rights course in Colombia I could see lots of things in north Caucasus also happen or happened in Latin America. Economic interests, paramilitaries, human rights violations happened in Colombia and Mexico. I can’t say that there are a lot of things that are unique for Russia, more that they are similar. When working with environmental groups it was the same. If you wanted to defend grey whales or California condors, the approach is very similar. There are not ideological differences. […] It’s expensive to bring everyone to Stockholm but I think it’s important to show that the contexts are similar, as in Russia as in Venezuela, in Burma as in Ethiopia.

While there seems to be a form of disagreement between the informants regarding the potential consequences that can befall the Russian human rights promoters, they do agree that other contexts are worse.

All countries are different I would say. The difference is probably that in Russia there is a greater interest in Sweden, for what we do. Russia does not differ in any particular way. But it does belong to the group of countries where it is not dangerous to work, we have worked in for example Uzbekistan and Egypt where they execute people. In Russia, Nemtsov was killed, it may happen at local level that a journalist at local level investigating corruption [gets killed], of course, people are killed in Russia, but it is not like in the other countries where they boiled people alive in oil. Russia belongs to the countries that are not very dangerous to work in. In Egypt, they execute people for treason, not in Russia. […] No problem. Russia is a medium-country I would like to say.

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200 UD3, Utrikesdepartementet, pp. 45.
201 Inna Bukshynovich, Civil Rights Defenders, pp. 24.
202 Inna Bukshynovich, Civil Rights Defenders, pp. 11.
This does not mean that the Russian context is easy to work with. However, it does give a positive note to what can be done in Russia, the fact that human rights promoters are allowed to operate albeit with great practical problems, Russian organizations do not have a distinguishable and different understanding of human rights, the motives of the Swedish human rights aid to Russia is to a great extent altruistic in its nature, gives a positive end-note to what can be achieved in Russia. UD3 stated that the situation in Russia is therefore “not a pitch-black sky.”

7. Analysis

Despite previous literature’s strong emphasis on the importance of a security-mindset when allocating aid, and the difficulties cultural relativism may account for, the informants participating in this thesis did not find these theories applicable as obstacle-creating in their human rights promotion in Russia. Instead, it is in the overcoming of the obstacles that one can find measures taken to lessen the cultural relativism that may exist due to the state-led oppression.

Although a country’s national discourse is the outcome of a continuous exchange between the populous and the government, the informants agree that the current shrinking of democratic space, the obliteration of civil and political rights and the introduction of an agent law, are not the unavoidable products that the Russian society would produce in case of an existence of a strong Russian cultural relativism. It could be argued that the combination of capacity building targeted at human rights promoters and the people-to-people contacts projects, who include “ordinary citizens” from all parts of society, has the potential to reduce differences in human rights understandings elicited by propaganda.

This contradicts the pessimistic findings of Henderson, Russia does indeed have a civil society, and a well-developed one at that. The positive finding of this thesis of the well-developed human rights organizations like-mindedness when it comes to the universality of human rights gives reason to believe that the human rights promotion led by Swedish donors has a potential to succeed.

Despite the informants almost universally agreeing that civil rights organizations in Russia do not understand human rights in a different way, the discrepancies and the de-prioritization of different rights show that cultural relativism does in fact influence the human rights promo-

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203 UD3, Utrikesdepartementet, pp. 46.
204 Ingelstam, pp. 42.
tion that is so important for Sweden and the West. UD2 reasoned that human rights understanding of donor and recipient is the same, however, Swedish donors highlight certain issues and are de-prioritized by Russian civil rights groups. This is a perception apparent in almost all the informants’ replies. One could easily argue that a difference in two issues, namely the rights of women and LGBT, the examples given by the informants, are just that, only two out very many rights. However, these two civil and political rights touch upon the very foundations of the universal human rights, for instance equal rights between men and women article 3 in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as they are understood today, and the cornerstone of modern Swedish foreign politics and aid. It is therefore a very relevant debate whether the dissonance between recipient and donor regarding these rights constitutes something that can be categorized within the theory of cultural relativism. Inna Bukhshtynovich deems this divergence a result of lack of education and understanding. However, one could trace this uncertainty with working towards LGBT-rights due to a state-led oppression. According to the informants, the anti-LGBT-rights sentiments are not shared by the people, but due to this law. This is only one of the foci of the Russian propaganda mechanism and what it uses in its targeted efforts to persuade the Russian audience of Western malicious influence in the country. A supposed Russian cultural relativism is thus not to blame for the ineffectiveness of human rights promotion and dispels the fundamental hypothesis of this thesis. However, despite this theory’s inapplicability when explaining obstacles, it is highly relevant when working towards improving rights perceptions within common Russians. Even though there are differences between donor and recipient, Swedish foreign aid donors try to improve on this area in the Russian context by working mainly through capacity building and people-to-people contacts. Within the ramifications of this thesis, the number of informants and the questions asked, it is not reasonable to ascribe the Swedish ways of promoting human rights due to Russian cultural relativism.

None of the informants agree that there is a specific trait within Russian history or tradition that inevitably leads to the way that the Russian society look today. Neither misunderstandings nor disagreements barely occur between donor and recipient. The development is simply the result of political progressions. It could be argued that the informants would not want to depict their Russian partners in a negative light and give answers that wouldn’t undermine their

205 UD2, pp. 15.
207 Inga Näslund, Palmecentret, pp. 30.
own credibility and work. However, the informants were well-informed regarding the universal rights versus cultural relativism debate and could give persuasive examples from international covenants regarding the universality and how an individual, whether Russian or not, would not see differently at violation of specific articles. The informants have established long lasting relations with their Russian partners, and it would be counterproductive if that relationship would be based on different understandings.

Thus, with the informants used and context studied, the theory that is very apparent in human rights promotion literature, cultural relativism, can therefore be dispelled in this thesis. A reason for this may very well be the consensus that is between the organizations that approach Swedish donors. In many of the cases, such as with Inga Näslund from Palmecentret, and the contacts that she has, relations have been developed for decades and the trust between the two parties is massive. In many ties made between Swedish and Russian organizations, it is the Russian organization that approaches Swedish donors in order to receive aid in various forms, and these are well-acquainted with the characteristics of universal human rights. It may very well be that the Swedish donors have answered this way for the very simple reason that they deal mostly with organizations partners they know and want to work towards the same results through the same way. However, according to the informant from Östgruppen and UD1, there is a desire within the Russian population regarding democratic cornerstones and, by extension, towards human rights. Despite many Russians believing that democracy is not important to them, the informants indicate that there is a positive attitude towards fundamental liberal rights. It is the word democracy and the implication that it had on Russian society during the 1990’s that has a negative connotation. They show that the Russian public has been coerced into believing that Russia is threatened and that traditional conservative values are the Russian way which leads to the shrinking of the democratic space.

Another reason for the inappropriateness of the cultural relativism theory according to the informants is that the idea of universal human rights are prevalent among all informants. Of course, it would be strange if human rights promoters did not consider human rights as universal because then they would not believe in the work that they do in other contexts. All the informants were very clear on the universality of human rights, and at times even corrected me when bringing up the characteristics of the cultural relativism theory.

The security dimension of Swedish human rights aid is not a theory that is applicable to the context of Russia, according to most of the informants. The question is whether this theory can be applied to any aid given by Swedish donors at all if it can’t be applied to Russia, since
the Russian proximity to Sweden and the fact that Sweden is dependent on a relationship to the country to the east. Security is not a factor that is prioritized, or in some cases not even considered, when allocating aid, except for one out of the ten informants. According to Östgruppen, human rights promotion is the most effective way to handle the security risk that is rising with the aggressive Russian foreign and domestic hostility towards foreign influence. The other informants regard the positive security outcome as a welcome side-effect, but nothing more than that.

The value of the enlightened self-interest theory would increase if broadened to not only include the security aspect of it. The informants agree that security would increase as a result of the human rights promotion, but it is not, contradictory to previous literature, an obstacle-creating factor, nor is it something that is worked towards improvement. The security situation is something that is important, yet human rights promotion is not seen, or is not used, as a primary tool to alleviate the already tense relationship between Sweden and Russia. Human rights promotion can be seen, as UD3 put it, a small part of the Swedish foreign policy to Russia. Security is combatted through other means.

It is certainly surprising to find out that self-interest is not, or to a very small extent, a factor when allocating aid. Previous literature has been adamant when discussing the importance that state’s ascribe aid as an important foreign policy tool when securing interests. Since the primary purpose of a state is to grant security to its citizens, it would be logical that one of the most useful tools available to a small but rich country is not used in that way. Despite the stance this thesis took early on in the theory section, moving from realism to enlightened self-interest because of the knowledge of Swedish aid’s altruistic past, the lack of security motivation is astounding. Swedish aid is marked by the long-term efforts with developmental goals in society.

The Swedish donor’s perception on how to deal with the tension between Sweden and a more aggressive Russia is not through improving the respect for human rights and democracy in Russia. The informants did neither make the direct connection that the respect for human rights is strongly correlated with the bettering of the security situation, nor think that this is desirable policy. In fact, a distinct barrier was drawn between the two. Only the informant from Östgruppen expressed their personal belief that human rights improves the security situation.

The finding of this thesis contradicts previous literature by showing that aid is given altruistically by Swedish donors. Sweden is a big donor in the international arena and to know to what extent self-interest guides its aid is of great importance.
With all this said, it is important to comment the external validity, the generalizability, of these results. Six of the informants work with allocation of aid to different organizations. They work directly with Russian organizations and follow a strategy to promote human rights in Russia. Since their central locations within the promotion-apparatus, they would certainly have attained a feeling for what the values are behind Swedish aid, deeper than what an official strategy might display. Their answers are mostly almost identical, showing that the answers that they have given, may be reflected within the aid mechanism. However, this is extremely difficult to determine since these informants only are six in sum. Nevertheless, one can state that these are opinions that exist within the allocation-level of the aid process in Sweden, and this is significant. Once again, the central positions that these actors have within Swedish aid should not be underrated. The results of this thesis should be taken into account to the extent that these opinions are valid and relevant when discussing what can be done to improve the human rights promotion. The humane motives of the Swedish aid are something that should be taken seriously.

To answer the research question posed in this thesis, to a very small extent can cultural relativism and enlightened self-interest account for obstacles in the Swedish human rights aid to Russia, but to counter Russian state-led propaganda and oppression, aid is directed towards the public in order to influence perceptions regarding human rights.

8. Conclusions

In this thesis I have used empirical evidence from interviews with Swedish foreign aid donors, working to promote human rights in Russia, to answer the following research question:

\[\text{To what extent can enlightened self-interest and cultural relativism account for obstacles for Swedish human rights promoters in Russia, and how may they be solved?}\]

The main finding is that the theories used in this thesis may only be applicable to a small degree. Enlightened self-interest, which may be considered a lighter version of realism in regards to the security aspect of giving aid, was clearly dismissed by the majority of the informants. According to them, it is neither part of the thought-process in the preparatory stages of allocating aid, nor is it considered a vital obstruction-creator. Though the majority of the informants agree that the positive security outcome may be regarded as a welcome side-effect, but nothing more than that. However, according to Östgruppen, human rights promotion is the

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208 Bryman, pp. 352.
*de facto* most effective way to handle the security risk that is rising with the aggressive Russian foreign and domestic hostility towards foreign influence. Since these results show inconclusiveness with respect to the applicability of the theory of enlightened self-interest, it cannot be dismissed. Also, it is impossible to know if the empirical information gained from the sample of informants is completely truthfully or representative for the entire security-risk analysis and decision-making chain that represents Swedish foreign aid work in Russia. However, for the majority of the informants in this sample, enlightened self-interest is not what forms the approach of their work. Therefore, to answer the part of the research question that concerns the theory of enlightened self-interest, one would need to perform a broader analysis of the security-risk analysis process and follow the decision-making chain that represents Swedish foreign aid work in Russia. Due to this fact, the second part of the research question, how the donors work to solve potential problems caused by the theories, can also not be accommodated in this thesis. Nonetheless, in regard to the second theory, cultural relativism has been identified in this thesis. However, it has not been acknowledged as a cultural heritage that has dictated a specific “Russian way” of adapting to human rights, but due to the state-led propaganda, which has been successful in swaying the public mind in a way that allows for an aggressive foreign policy and a restricting of rights. Therefore, the theory of cultural relativism may be applied to the Swedish aid to Russia, insofar as it may be regarded a preventive measure. In the people-to-people contacts projects that the organizations form included in this thesis, ideas of liberalization and respect for universal human rights may form within ordinary people.

Since the Russian, state-led oppression has been the main factor that human rights donors and recipients are combatting in their work to promote human rights, it is this that the focus should be placed on, both in research and in practice. Therefore, the main contribution of this thesis is that it finds the theory of enlightened self-interest not to be applicable to the work of Swedish foreign aid donors promoting human rights in Russia. Instead, this thesis finds that a more fruitful avenue for future research would likely be to explore the applicability of literature based on the “authoritarian pushback”. This conclusion is based on the fact that the informants’ responses reflect the importance and centrality of this notion in the context of Russia. In this thesis, I had hoped to be able to explain important ways to work in contexts where the government is continuously working against the human rights movement. I hoped to do so by addressing whether there are interests pertaining to the donor that could cause problems, or within the Russian human rights organizations. Due to the theories chosen, this was not possible. Instead, I believe that to really start grasping at influential ways to prompt change in Russia, one must
investigate ways reduce the state-led oppression. This of course sounds like an incredibly difficult task, yet something must be done to prevent the deterioration of rights of the people of Russia.

Nonetheless, this thesis can conclude that perceptions regarding the human rights promotion in Russia are positive and hopeful, and that the recipient Russian organizations are professional, dedicated and brave. Within the organizations that have participated in this thesis, neither cultural relativism nor a security agenda is perceived to cause obstacles, only the regime. This may mean that the stage is set when a regime change happens since donor motivations are virtuous and organizations are in agreement. Even though the uphill struggle may seem arduous, the movement toward a greater respect for human rights and democracy is possible!
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Appendix

**Intervjuguide**

**TEMA I: Om organisationen**

På vilka sätt har ni bidragit med att förbättra MR-situationen i Ryssland sedan 2014? (kortfattat)
Vad är er organisations största problem med att jobba med ryska civilsamhällsorganisationer fokuserade på MR?
På vilka sätt försöker ni att övervinna dessa problem?

**TEMA II: Säkerhetstäkandets påverkan på MR-arbetet**

Till vilken utsträckning anser du att Sverige bidrar med MR-främjande pga. ett säkerhetsperspektiv?
Till vilken utsträckning anser du att det svenska säkerhetstänket utgör problem för MR-arbetet i Ryssland?
På vilka sätt påverkar ett svenskt säkerhetstänk valet av MR-organisationer ni arbetar med?
På vilka sätt påverkar ett svenskt säkerhetstänk arbetet med dessa MR-organisationer?

**TEMA III: Det ”ryska” sättet att arbeta med och förstå MR**

Till vilken grad anser du detta vara ett stort problem i arbetet med MR-främjande i Ryssland?
Finns det något speciellt ”ryskt” sätt att arbeta med MR?
Om ja, hur manifestar den sig och hur påverkar det arbetet?
Anser du att det ofta sker missförstånd mellan er och ryska organisationer?
Anser du att det finns en rysk definition av vad MR bör vara?
Om möjligt, på vilket sätt är den ryska kontexten annorlunda att jobba i gentemot andra länder?

**TEMA IV: Jämförande av teorierna**

Vilket av säkerhetstäkandet eller ryska sättet att arbeta påverkar arbetet mest?
Hur påverkar säkerhetstänket och ryska sättet att arbeta arbetet med:
- Massmedia
- Jämlikhet
- Religionsfrihet
Finns det MR-områden (medborgerliga och politiska) som kan arbetas mer/mindre inom?

**TEMA V: Andra svårigheter?**

Finns det övriga svårigheter? Tex byråkratiska hinder, andra länders MR-prioriteringar etc.
Hur mycket påverkar dessa faktorer arbetet med MR i Ryssland?
Kompetens inom området? Tex inlärning om området

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