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Resourceful Civil Society

Navigating the Changing Landscapes
of Civil Society Organizations

Edited by

Zhanna Kravchenko · Lisa Kings
Katarzyna Jezierska

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Preface

This volume grew out of the project *The Social Mechanisms of Creating Memberless Civil Society Organizations in Poland, Russia and Sweden*, supported by the Swedish National Research Council. The project ran from 2015 through 2019, bringing us into contact with numerous activists, community organizers, civil society professionals, experts, and policy advisors in Poland, Russia, and Sweden. We are deeply indebted to all of these individuals for opening their doors to us, sharing their vast knowledge and experiences, and helping us find new topics to pursue.

Working on this anthology has been a collective process requiring dialogue and cooperation between the editors and the authors, as well as with a broad community of researchers. We are especially grateful to the authors who patiently worked with us long before the concept for this volume became fully developed. It was during our workshop in Stockholm in February 2019 that some of the key concepts were formulated, connections were established, and the book took shape. We gratefully acknowledge generous support from the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation for that workshop.

In developing the concept of this book, we have drawn on the ideas and research of scholars around us. We extend our thanks to colleagues who commented on earlier versions of some chapters, especially to Adrienne Sörbom from the Centre for the Study of Political Organisation

(Södertörn University) and Stefan Einarsson, Torbjörn Einarsson, Marta Reuter, and Filip Wijkström from the Stockholm Center for Civil Society Studies (Stockholm School of Economics). We have benefited greatly from discussions with the attendees of the International Workshop on Civil Society Research held at Södertörn University in October 2019 and was supported by the Swedish National Research Council. We are also grateful to Amari Barash, who copyedited all contributions in this volume, lending her expertise, insight, and attention to detail to the whole project.

Transliteration from Russian is done according to a simplified version of the Library of Congress (LOC) system, apart from internationally established words (e.g. Nevsky instead of Nevskii). All translations from Polish, Russian, and Swedish are authors' unless otherwise indicated.

Huddinge, Sweden
Huddinge, Sweden
Trollhättan, Sweden

Zhanna Kravchenko
Lisa Kings
Katarzyna Jezierska

Praise for *Resourceful Civil Society*

“*Resourceful Civil Society* is a pioneering volume in exploring new ways of how civil society organizations and nonprofits deal with and adapt to significantly changing environments that endanger their missions and visions by putting their very base of existence at risk. The volume stands out for its innovative approach to analyzing processes of organizational transformation.”

—Annette Zimmer, *Professor of Social Policy and Comparative Politics at Münster University, Germany*

“Comparing the conditions for civil society activities in Russia, Poland and Sweden is challenging but also highly relevant considering the present movement in numerous societies from liberal democracy towards more authoritarian forms of government. In this respect, the book is very useful and strongly recommended in the effort to understand the role of civil society in a time characterized by comprehensive societal challenges”

—Thomas P. Boje, *Professor of Sociology at Roskilde University, Denmark*

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1

Introduction

Zhanna Kravchenko, Lisa Kings,
and Katarzyna Jezierska

This volume explores the relationships between civil society, state, and market in Poland, Russia, and Sweden. In these countries and around the world, these relationships have undergone significant transformation in recent decades, with managerialism and government bureaucracy permeating civil society (Bode & Brandsen, 2014; Maier et al., 2016). Civil society organizations' engagement in state procurement programs and embrace of new public management technologies and rationalities as well as profit-oriented project-based approaches (Benevolenski & Toepler, 2017; Eikenberry & Drapal Kluver, 2004; Hedling & Meeuwisse, 2015) suggest a merging of the institutional logics of the three societal spheres. Most often, the process of blurring boundaries between the civil society, the state,

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and the market forges “soft” forms of pressure that nevertheless effectively diminish civil society’s ability to provide critical perspectives on social, economic, and political developments (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2018). They halt reproduction of the internal logic of membership and the values of participation, challenging the potential democratic impact of civil society as a whole (Eikenberry, 2009; Henderson, 2002; Salamon & Toepler, 2015).

Additionally, stricter state regulations for accountability and political engagement as well as direct repression of forms of collective actions with the potential to confront political and economic elites erode fundamental democratic rights. Regardless of the particularities of individual political and ideological regimes, both democratic and non-democratic governments exert significant pressures on civil society, sometimes under the banner of the fight against international terrorism (Buyse, 2018) and sometimes in the name of “sovereignty” from liberal democratic values (Casula, 2013). Albeit more violent and therefore more visible, repression leads to outcomes similar to those taking place under “soft” governance: The features of collective organizing usually attributed to civil society—autonomous engagement, voluntary and nonprofit activities, plural and particularistic identities (Rosenblum & Post, 2002)—are being challenged.

With this book, we aim to demonstrate how civil society organizations navigate the dynamic and complicated terrain of expanding opportunities for market- and government-oriented forms of engagement as well as the “shrinking” spaces for advocacy and contentious civic mobilization (Carothers & Brechenmacher, 2014). The chapters gathered here theoretically interrogate, and provide empirical evidence of, the accommodation, negotiation, and contestation of an extensive scope of external pressures by civil society organizations in three countries. We highlight that state and market pressures on civil society are exerted first and foremost by means of (re)arranging and controlling resource accumulation, use, and transformation. The influence of market institutional logic is facilitated by civil society organizations’ engagement in profit-generating activities (e.g., selling merchandise) and the need to adapt market rationalities in order to achieve a sustainable inflow of revenue, often in the context of professionalized rather than associational organizational forms (Maier et al., 2016). When states regulate or manipulate the sphere of

collective action, they often do so by directly funding the types of action and organizations that align with state policies (Turunen & Weinryb, 2020) and by conditioning, limiting, or completely cutting off access to independent funding sources as well as by severely curtailing access to the political sphere, for instance, by means of restricting some organizations from partaking in consultation processes (Daucé, 2015).

While financial resources are provided or withdrawn to put pressure on civil society, they are also used by civil society organizations to adapt to and counter these pressures and manifest their durable nature (Sampson et al., 2005). Organizations develop strategies to counter this method of interference and find new, innovative ways of organizing collective life. Our approach recognizes organizational agency in the primary processes that change the civil society landscape. We explore the repertoire of actions that constitute resourcefulness on the part of organizations weighing the benefits and costs associated with various kinds of resources, access opportunities and restrictions, and the dynamic nature of resources.

Before introducing this volume's contributions, this chapter presents our conceptual framework of resourcefulness and establishes Poland, Russia, and Sweden as particularly relevant cases for understanding the shifting landscapes of civil society. By way of illustration, we offer three examples of external pressures and organizational resourcefulness employed in three organizations, one from each of our selected countries.¹

The Organizational Reality of a Reconfigured Civil Society

It is a challenge to translate the encompassing transformative processes often termed “professionalization,” “NGO-ization,” “marketization,” “hybridization”, etc. into the realities of organizational identity and day-to-day operation. In much of the literature, each of these processes is treated separately (Maier et al., 2016). Rather than the processes themselves, our main focus of exploration is the effects of those processes on the ability of civil society organizations to carry out their missions. The first of our three examples is the European Solidarity Center in Gdańsk, Poland, a foundation behind a museum and a library created to preserve

the memory of the trade unions' contribution to the fall of the communist regime in Poland and beyond. The Polish movement *Solidarność* (Solidarity) is often seen as the historical foundation of contemporary Polish civil society (Grabowska & Szawiel, 2003; Załęski, 2012). Our Russian organizational example is the NGO Development Center in St. Petersburg, one of the many capacity-building professional organizations that contributed to the development of civil society all over the country through the distribution of information and resources (cf. Jakobson & Sanovich, 2010). In 2015, like many other prominent organizations, the NGO Development Center was forced to register with the Ministry of Justice as a "foreign agent."² Our third example is equmenia, a local branch of a national umbrella organization for religious youth associations in Gothenburg, Sweden. Equmenia has been an important part of Swedish civil society since the faith-driven revivalist movement, temperance, and the workers' movements contributed to the democratization of Sweden in the early twentieth century (Micheletti, 1995).³

Chronologically, the first exertion of pressure relevant to our discussion challenged equmenia in late 2018, when the organization was denied state funding for its youth scout activities on the basis that its work in propagating the evangel of Jesus could be exclusionary. A few months later, in Poland, the Ministry of Culture threatened that the European Solidarity Center would suffer substantial financial cuts unless the organization accepted state control. At about the same time, the NGO Development Center was awarded a grant from one of Russia's most prestigious state funding programs despite its status as a "foreign agent" and attendant precarity. On the surface, these three organizations and the challenges they experienced are very different, shaped by their own characteristics as well as the sociopolitical contexts they inhabit. We discuss their idiosyncratic institutional contexts in more detail in the following section, but it is important to note here that, contextual specifics notwithstanding, the common underlying concern is a narrowing of interpretations of which ideas qualify as democratic and liberal, resulting in limitations on the potential of civil society as a relatively autonomous sphere that manifests the interests and will of citizens. Here, we bring the reader's attention to the fact that the vignettes presented exemplify state pressure on civil society organizations: the state negotiating its own governing mandate

(equmenia), mixing oppressive and soft powers by assigning some organizations punitive labels and simultaneously endowing them with resources (NGO Development Center), and attempting co-optation (European Solidarity Center). When forced to negotiate the extent of its autonomy, each organization utilized various types of resources and found resourceful ways of navigating the changing demands of the state.

In the case of the Swedish equmenia, an outcry of solidarity on the part of a large umbrella organization for socially-oriented civil society organizations resulted in a reversal of the state's decision to withdraw funding. Subsequently, a discussion about the need to renew interpretations of what constitutes a democratic organization eligible for funding was initiated by the national government's launching of an inquiry into what value system an organization must espouse in order to qualify for public funding (SOU, 2019). Thus, this paradigmatic case resulted in explicit debates about the autonomy of civil society and the limits of state interference. In Poland, with the help of various individuals, civil society organizations, and the local government, the European Solidarity Center managed to crowdfund the amount of its Ministry of Culture funding in a remarkably short time, thus refusing cooptation (Katka, 2019). This became a powerful message to the government that its attempts at control would spur action. It also provoked popular debates about the legacy of *Solidarność* in times of de-democratization. The Russian NGO Development Center found itself in the paradoxical position of simultaneously being the subject of punitive measures (being listed as a "foreign agent") and accepting financial support from the state. This contradiction, while securing the immediate economic survival of the organization, put at risk its symbolic resources in the form of legitimacy among partners and beneficiaries. Together, these three cases provide an empirical basis for our challenging of the understanding of the state as a monolithic entity and for our unpacking of the complex relationship between a particular state and civil society. Distinguishing different levels, forms, and instruments of state operation generates an analytical perspective that captures the specific institutional context of the strong state.

Obviously, the relative autonomy of civil society refers to the market as well as to the state. Independence from profit-driven interests as civil

society's core characteristic is often emphasized in the nomenclature "nonprofit" or "voluntary" sector, terms which are often used as synonyms for civil society. In recent years, studies have brought attention to the fact that "business-like" rationales and practices are increasingly permeating civil society (Maier et al., 2016). Organizations commodify their work by offering services in exchange for direct monetary compensation from beneficiaries or third parties, for example, public authorities (Eikenberry & Drapal Kluver, 2004). This commodification of civic engagement often takes the form of project-based contracts (Hedling & Meeuwisse, 2015). Both equmenia and the NGO Development Center competed for project funding despite the bureaucratic, symbolic, and financial costs accompanying the application process. While equmenia was deemed "undemocratic" as a Christian organization in a secular state, the Development Center was treated as an unpatriotic "foreign agent" capable of influencing public opinion and authorities while receiving foreign funding. Nevertheless, both organizations were granted state support.

A more business-like approach also bases recruitment criteria on formal training and professional experience rather than commitment to the issues and the organization (Salamon, 1999). Those who are not employed are usually engaged sporadically and around specific issues, often as potential donors or service consumers rather than as members. Working with such categories of supporters represents a departure from traditional concepts of membership (Papakostas, 2011), but when mobilized efficiently, these supporters can constitute a powerful resource for the organization, as exemplified by the European Solidarity Center's monumental crowdfunding campaign.

Despite the profound effects on organizational stability, functioning, and identity exerted by the pressures of political, economic, and cultural shifts, civil society organizations exhibit an adaptability that cannot be reduced to conformity. Existing organizations find ways to preserve their missions and resist co-optation (Kravchenko & Moskvina, 2018), while new organizations emerge with the aim of counteracting the processes that are undermining the autonomy of civil society (Kings et al., 2016). A variety of resources and instruments may be at their disposal. Direct mobilization and building solidarity against state co-optation attempts

has already been described in the case of the European Solidarity Center in Gdańsk. The NGO Development Center in St. Petersburg also drew on its contacts with other civil society organizations and launched the project *Chuwstwo Loktia* (which loosely translates as “Shoulder to Shoulder”) in 2019, which aimed to create spaces for the accumulation and sharing of material and immaterial resources between local and regional partners. Similarly, in a context in which civil society and the state have historically engaged in far-reaching cooperations, it was the solidary support of other civil society organizations that prompted the reversal of local authorities’ decision to deny funding to equmenia in Gothenburg.

Demonstrating skill in navigating institutional landscapes, negotiating boundaries, and managing external and internal limitations and opportunities, the three organizations discussed above exemplify remarkable resourcefulness. Compelled to acquire external funding—in all three cases, public funding—they each experienced pressure to comply with conditions stipulated by their sources: accepting ideas of democracy, governance, civic rights, and legitimacy. Each organization then attempted to negotiate and subvert those ideas in order to continue its work. We argue that a similar process of accommodation, negotiation, and contestation emerges when other types of resources are accumulated and transformed into activities, identities, and networks. It is this capacity for adaptability and resilience on the part of civil society organizations, their ability to engage with and stand against external attempts at control and enforced dependence, that this volume explores. The comprehensive empirical and innovative theoretical approaches of the individual studies investigate a variety of organizational forms, resource types, and methods of accommodation and contestation while tracing local expressions of global trends.

Case Selection: A Shared History of a Strong State

There are some apparent dissimilarities between the three countries considered in this book. The most striking of these pertain to their disparate histories of state socialism (Poland and Russia) and state corporatism

(Sweden); their distinct relations to international organizations such as the EU and NATO; and their differing paths and intensities of engagement in current processes of transformation toward globalization, (neo) liberalism, and marketization (Miller & Taylor, 2009). The even more deeply engrained categorizations of capitalism versus communism or democratic versus authoritarian regimes (Brown, 2001) figure as well. A conventional comparison of such contexts would lean on the cross-regime approach, highlighting varying clusters of historical relations among state, market, and civil society (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). The cross-regime perspective, however, is limiting, especially as such comparisons tend to present static organizational landscapes without illuminating dynamic developments in multiple contexts (e.g., Archambault et al., 2014; Henriksen et al., 2012).

Another consequence of the regime approach is that it often draws scholars into debates about whether civil society even exists in Eastern Europe and whether it can carry out the functions assigned to it by the Western intellectual tradition. Since this tradition is rooted in a specific practice and institutional framework, it treats the Eastern European experience of the last thirty years as “a linear temporality of catching up” (Kulawik, 2020, p. 3). In addition, this experience is so different from the Western experience that it is easier to overlook or erase than it is to understand and conceptualize (cf. Kravchenko, 2017). The catching-up view collides with the perceptions of those who are actively involved in Eastern European civil society and creates spatial and epistemic boundaries within academic knowledge production (Kulawik, 2020). Making the case for a vibrant civil society and its significance for society at large in former socialist, Soviet countries opens room for a discussion that overcomes the limitations of the regime approach.

In the interest of capturing the dynamic changes within and between our selected countries and foregoing regime discussions in general, we recognize the abovementioned disparities between them but focus on their similarities. Our point of departure is the recognition of a common experience of a strong and large state, a characteristic that impacts not only how state bureaucracy interacts with nongovernmental organizations, but also how market rationality penetrates nonprofit initiatives. The history of state socialism in Poland and Russia, on one hand, and of

the neocorporatist state in Sweden, on the other, has left a legacy despite substantial rollbacks in more recent years. State socialism as a scientific concept is used principally to designate an institutional setting characterized by single-party polity and planned economy (e.g., Sokol, 2001), an arrangement that consolidates legislative, executive, and judicial powers into the state apparatus and subjugates society and economy to the state (Kamiński, 1991). State corporatism is a system of political representation in which the state incorporates various powerful interest organizations into the decision-making process outside the parliamentary process (Lewin, 1994). At the same time, the relative decentralization of governance through a system of semi-independent directorates has increased the political role of the bureaucratic administration through which state and corporate interests intertwine (Rothstein, 1988).

Nongovernmental nonprofits existed throughout the time of state socialism in Poland and Russia and were an essential part of Swedish state corporatism. Earlier research has discussed whether the expansive (welfare) state “crowds out” private voluntary, familial, and communal forms of self-organization and social provision; scholars have generally concluded that the opposite is usually the case (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2003; Skocpol, 1996; van Oorschot & Arts, 2005). However, the role that civil society organizations are relegated in the context of a strong state differs from that of other institutional settings. Although vital for sustaining state legitimacy in all three countries, civil society organizations did not engage in independent welfare provision under the Communist Party’s monopoly on power (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). In the communist period, the state welfare model purported to guarantee universal social and economic rights for citizens, whereas nongovernmental actors, with their services integrated into the system of welfare provision, were meeting more specific needs such as redistributing public resources (Brenk, 2017; Wengle & Rassel, 2008). The Swedish institutional setting, although similarly reducing the role of civil society organizations in service provision to a minimum, differed significantly in that it provided opportunities for advocacy and opinion-building around social and other issues (Lundström & Wijkström, 1995).

For our discussion, the most illustrative example of the embeddedness of civil society organizations in state resources, structures, and processes

is that of trade unions. As workers' movements played a central role in the establishment of socialist regimes around Eastern Europe and of social democracy in Northern Europe, they became important agents alleviating social, economic, and political tensions. In Poland and Russia, such movements were integrated into the system of workplace management, enforcing regulations and plans but also giving voice to workers' interests and channeling state resources into services—mostly as a complement to state-provided services, but also parallel to them (Il'in, 1995). While social services are not part of the trade union mandate, Swedish trade unions were (and remain) represented in bodies of public administration and private corporations; they provide expertise on legislative measures proposed by other political actors and propose political initiatives of their own (Allvin & Sverke, 2000). Although systems of integrating nongovernmental organizations into governmental procedures and co-opting potentially oppositional forces to align with state interests have their national specificities, the mechanism of integration and co-optation via the (re)distribution of financial and power resources seems to be a common one. Moreover, it has persisted through political and/or socioeconomic paradigm shifts in Poland, Russia, and Sweden.

With the fall of socialism in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a wave of unprecedented social mobilization rippled across the globe, signaling a rejection of state interference in economics and society. For our discussion, the most important outcomes of this transformation were, on one hand, a proliferation of various forms of for-profit and not-for-profit economic and social activities and, on the other hand, a substantial scaling down of publicly funded welfare programs in all three countries (Cook, 2013; Hort, 2014). Entangled in the narrative of the transition to capitalism and the supposed need to catch up with the West, the professionalized organization as a blueprint for civil society organizations emerged. After the initial wave of mass mobilization subsided, those civil society organizations that remained either lost their progressive role (e.g., trade unions; see, for instance, Heyns & Bialecki, 1991; Shubin, 2008) or assumed the function of public service providers (Alekseeva, 2010; Henderson, 2002; Jezierska, 2015). The need to fill the void left by state rollbacks was reinforced by EU pre-accession grants (for Poland) as well as American funding (for Poland and Russia) (Crotty, 2009; Leś

et al., 2000). Foreign funding often sponsored concrete projects involving collaborations between emerging organizations and (local) state and self-governing authorities.

Although it is not a social service provider, the NGO Development Center has become a poster organization for the outcomes of this process. More importantly, its fate as a “foreign agent” is illustrative of how vulnerable such civil society organizations can become when the state reasserts its power and reintroduces the principles of state domination over society. In Russia, stricter regulations for the registration and accountability of foreign-funded organizations were first introduced in 2005. Independent funding to civil society organizations dwindled following the introduction of the “foreign agents” law (2012) and the Ministry of Justice’s lists of “undesirable organizations” (2015) (Moser & Skripchenko, 2018; Tysiachniouk et al., 2018). It became costly for civil society organizations to receive foreign funding and engage in advocacy (Semenov & Bederson, 2017), thus making state funding one of the most significant sources for civil society as a whole (Jakobson & Sanovich, 2010; Salamon et al., 2015).

Similarly, in Poland, the period of initial liberalization was followed by a (forceful) reinstatement of central government as “the center of gravity” for civil society across several Eastern European countries (Meyer et al., 2020). When the radical right-wing party Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) won a parliamentary majority and the presidency, attacks on civil society organizations, especially those with clear liberal or leftist orientations, ensued. Harassment, in the forms of excessive auditing, public smearing, and cuts in funding (all evident in the above-described case of the European Solidarity Center), is directed only at certain organizations, while others (often right-wing organizations) enjoy generous governmental support in terms of symbolic and economic resources (Szuleka, 2018).

Although less dramatic, the rollback of the Swedish welfare state took place during approximately the same period. It led to the establishment of a mixed welfare model, while a still (comparatively) strong public sector has opened for private and civil society welfare providers supervised and financed by the state (Hartman, 2011; Hort et al., 2019). As a result, a shift emerged in what issues stimulate civil society activity. Already in

the 1990s, Lundström and Wijkström highlighted that organizations aiming at societal change were gradually losing members—and resources generated from membership—to service-oriented organizations (Lundström & Wijkström, 1995, 1997). At the same time, the privatization of social service provision failed to allow nonprofit organizations to successfully compete with public and profit-oriented providers, especially in education, healthcare, and the labor market (Trägårdh, 2012). With diminishing opportunities to generate resources from members, and public procurements less broadly available than envisioned at the time of initial policy design, civil society organizations find themselves relying on direct state support (e.g., Regeringskansliet, 2015). Like their Polish and Russian counterparts, they often work on a project basis, receiving grants rather than making profits.

Breaking with liberal political principles by means of the overt financial and symbolic undermining of civil society and the targeting of visible, high-status organizations is symptomatic of a larger process: that of the state takeover of independent social institutions, which is typical of increasingly illiberal regimes like Poland's and Russia's (Christensen & Weinstein, 2013; Zakaria, 1997). However, as mentioned above, tendencies toward limiting and restricting the operation of civil society organizations are also evident in established democracies like Sweden, although in different forms. While the process of governance still relies on the participation of civil society in key aspects of public decision-making, access to power resources is unequally distributed among civil society organizations (Trägårdh, 2007).

Moreover, the principle of autonomy of civil society can be undermined in the name of other societal concerns, for instance, national security. In 2014, an illustrative debate related to the fight against terror raised controversy in Sweden. The state-initiated investigation of violent radicalism (SOU, 2013) and the government's policy recommendations were heavily criticized as threatening the very foundation of democracy. Leading scholars of social movements and civil society have asserted that the methods suggested by the government to restrain extremism would force public employees, for example teachers, to police public opinions and attitudes (Wennerhag & Wahlström, 2014). Moreover, as our vignette of equumonia demonstrates, the application of scrutiny and censure can be quite arbitrary. The rejection of public funding to equumonia

was predicated on a local regulation that the activities of civil society organizations may not discriminate on the basis of religion. It was the prerogative of the funder to determine that participation in the organization's activities required identification with the Christian faith, although such a claim had never been made.

To conclude, a civil society emerging and operating vis-à-vis a strong state pressures organizations to become executors in the service of the state apparatus, blunting the ideal of the critical potential of civil society as a space of alternative visions and challenges to the socioeconomic status quo. To understand the institutional context in which civil society organizations interact with the state and the market, it is necessary to acknowledge the importance of historical legacies as well as that of contemporary developments. We therefore strive to move away from the still prevalent East/West divide in the contemporary civil society literature; we dismiss as unproductive and misleading the customary view that Eastern European civil society is weak, or even nonexistent, in comparison to that of Western democracies (Howard, 2002; Salamon et al., 2015). For decades, such an approach implied that the East as a geographical entity was at an earlier stage of development and should, with time, follow the lead of the West.

Inspired by recent, albeit still limited, critical attempts to contribute to another, more complex and locally sensitive approach (Ekiert & Kubik, 2017; Jacobsson & Korolczuk, 2017), we believe that the selection of Poland, Russia, and Sweden as cases for this volume holds the potential for new insights into unexpected similarities and differences among them. In the following section, we propose that such a synthesizing approach is made possible by examining how resources are (re)produced, accumulated/acquired, employed, shared, and (re)distributed in often creative and unique ways to allow organizations to negotiate, contest, and adapt to their institutional conditions while continuing to pursue their missions.

Resources as a Contrast Medium

This book's distinctive analytical perspective treats resource flows as a contrast medium, allowing us to study processes of transformation in civil society. Resources refer generally to the material and immaterial inputs necessary for organizational operations. Organizational theory

recognizes a wide spectrum of resources, including finances (Binder, 2007); organizational structure; the capacity, knowledge, and ability to legitimately exert power (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006); ideas, narrations, and myths (Creed et al., 2002; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006); and symbolic and discursive means of expression (Hardy & Phillips, 1999). As nomenclature differs depending on academic tradition and the specificity of the research questions, we endeavor to aggregate and categorize this variety by distinguishing between material and immaterial resources (cf. Hardy & Maguire, 2017). Material resources consist of the finances, technologies, raw materials, and physical spaces on which civil society organizations rely to varying degrees. Immaterial resources can be grouped into two subcategories: symbolic resources, such as discourses, myths, identities, and knowledge; and relational resources, such as human resources, interorganizational networks, and intraorganizational structures and hierarchies. Immaterial resources highlight the interconnectedness of civil society organizations but also their ability to carve spaces in the heterogeneous expanse of civil society, thereby positioning themselves (often hierarchically) vis-à-vis other organizations.

While such analytical aggregations are useful, it is necessary to remain aware of the diverse nature of resources as well as the ways in which disparate resources are interconnected and interdependent (e.g., Dodworth, 2014). Throughout this volume, we examine various aspects of the above-mentioned categories as well as combinations that allow for the dynamic operationalization of resources. As an overarching conceptual approach that unites all contributions to this book, we assert that resources enter organizations from different sources in different forms and are attributed different meanings. Organizations accommodate resources and establish relationships with the sources of resources. This is a process that intertwines accumulation, accommodation, operation of resources, and dependence on and communication about them. The use of resources in, for example, delivering services and advocating, and the results of such activities, affect organizational target groups, members, and the broader society through material transformations and sent-out/received communications. The results also affect future opportunities for resource mobilization and accumulation.

An organization's form, for example, membership-based association, NGO, think tank, charity foundation, etc., determines what resources are available; organizational form itself may also be the subject of transformation. Because of specific relationships with the sources of resources, an association may gradually transform into a more professionalized nonprofit with paid personnel, whereas a charity foundation may need to establish a subsidiary for-profit organization in order to accommodate commercial activities as a source of revenue. For instance, the NGO Development Center, which began as a nonprofit more than 20 years ago, gradually acquired a for-profit subsidiary *and* a charity foundation. This arrangement makes it possible to separate at least one part of the holding—the charity foundation registered under a completely different name—from the “foreign agent” label as well as to simplify accounting for nonprofit and for-profit finances. In the case of the European Solidarity Center, funding was being used to initiate a (partial) takeover by means of the establishment of a staff position for a representative of the Ministry of Culture. Allowing this would have affected the position of the Center relative to other civil society organizations and influenced their activities.

Clearly, separating different kinds of resources is difficult; indeed, in some cases, it is unnecessary.⁴ In order to capture resourcefulness, forms of financial resources (state funding programs, voluntary work, private donations, or revenues from for-profit activities) are examined in this book with reference to how those resources intertwine with the organizations' ability to establish and utilize internal human resources, unique organizational identities, or connections to other organizations. The three cases in the vignettes offered in this introductory chapter all provide examples of such intertwining. The NGO Development Center received state funding to create an arrangement for sharing other material resources, drawing legitimacy from its reputation as a reliable partner to other civil society organizations through a long history of capacity-building activities. Similarly, the European Solidarity Center and equimania draw on their networks of partner organizations and supporters to counteract or reverse pressure from state authorities.

In organizing this volume, we strove to reveal both social mechanisms that transform similar/different conditions and patterns of navigating resources into similar/different outcomes for civil society organizations (Hedström & Swedberg, 1998; Stinchcombe, 2005). We thus divide the contributions into three parts according to the singularities they explore: the organizational processes, structures, and identities embedded in the resources that the civil society organizations need in order to operate; the strategies used to navigate the institutional conditions that determine their access to resources; and, finally, the resources' own spatial and temporal dynamics and transformative disposition.

Introducing the Volume

The framework of resources as a contrast medium against which organizational and institutional structures and dynamic processes manifest themselves brings together various approaches that discern the transformation of civil society in relation to the state and the market. *Part I* of this volume provides an understanding of the potential of financial resources to impact the ways in which organizations, social movements, and civil societies as a whole become inserted into political discursive frameworks and adjust to the benefits and costs associated with those resources. The chapters included in *Part II* continue the discussion by exploring various aspects of organizational agency in relation to the institutional and organizational contexts that condition access to resources. *Part III* is a multilayered undertaking that investigates the complex and dynamic character of resources and their interactions with organizations. With intersections in the theoretical and empirical treatments of their research questions, the authors aim to transcend the boundaries imposed by disciplinary orientations, socioeconomic and political settings, and geographical borders. Together, the chapters of this book demonstrate the value of understanding transformations in civil society through the accommodation, negotiation, and contestation of various resources.

Part I: Resources as Constraints

We begin with Katarzyna Jezierska's "*Pecunia olet*: The funding dilemma for think tanks in Poland," directing attention to an often overlooked part of civil society, a type of research and advocacy organization that projects an image of autonomy from any specific group interests: think tanks. These organizations played a key role in the post-socialist transformation in Poland, including the introduction of liberal reforms in politics and economy as well as the very emergence of a support infrastructure for the country's civil society. The author reasserts earlier research that suggested that external financial resources may create dependency on the sources of funding but may also increase organizations' visibility as well as their engagement with and influence over various stakeholders. Striving to preserve their image of autonomy, think tanks develop diverse, selective strategies for soliciting and accepting funds. The chapter's original contribution to this research field is in demonstrating that resources are at the center of some of the crucial aspects of organizing, connecting an organization's identity with its external influence and impact. Jezierska also recasts some of the tenets of resource dependency theory by revealing that, while selectivity and diversification are instrumental for the appearance of independence, they only diminish the scope of funding and intensify the "pathological projectification" of an organization's work.

Shifting the focus to Russia, Yulia Skokova and Christian Fröhlich explore how the allocation of state funding serves to incorporate civil society organizations into the process of welfare provision while at the same time insidiously subjugating them to the traditionalist–conservative political discourse. "Domestic funding for civil society in a non-democratic context: The example of the Presidential Grants in Russia" reveals the authoritarian character of the illiberal political regime that, in the absence of a totalitarian ideology, builds its legitimacy on a selective approach to cooptation, preferential treatment, and sanctioning of civil society. The Presidential Grants aim to direct civic engagement toward the delivery of educational, recreational, and social services, an arena considered removed from contentious politics. This is not a uniquely Russian phenomenon; civil society organizations around the world are included

in the provision of welfare services. Here, however, grant applicants are forced to frame their activities as carriers of the values of traditionalism, nationalism, militarism, patriotism, and orthodoxy. The data indicate that a significant proportion of organizations accept the terms of engagement with the state in pursuit of regular funding and organizational stability.

The chapter “Polish human rights organizations: Resisting institutional pressures,” by Zhanna Kravchenko, Katarzyna Jezierska, Marta Gumkowska, Beata Charycka, and Magdalena Szafranek, explores what happens to civil society organizations as they work to ensure organizational survival without jeopardizing their mission and legitimacy among stakeholders by acquiescing to the demands of the state. Using survey data gathered by an independent think tank, the Klon/Jawor Association, the authors focus on organizations that work with various issues related to social justice and anti-discrimination. The study presents those organizations’ navigation of an environment that suppresses civic mobilization and democratic participation, employing a variety of financial, human, and symbolic resources as well as a comprehensive network of cooperation with other organizations. The results suggest that in illiberal regimes, contentious action can be generated by professionalized civil society organizations that withstand cooptation by utilizing polarization around liberal democratic values.

In “Rural community development in Sweden: From challenging to mainstream?”, Anette Forsberg expands the historical perspective on the role of financial resources in the transformation of the Swedish rural movement since the 1970s. Rural mobilizations emerged as a counter-movement to the politics of economic growth and urban development, which not only neglected rural communities but systematically deprived them of economic opportunities, social infrastructure, and population. Following the tradition of the Swedish people’s movement (*folkrörelse*), voluntary associations, cooperatives, and networks set out to reestablish and support local communities organizing educational and recreational events, organizing information campaigns, creating job opportunities, and providing much-needed welfare services. In accordance with the *folkrörelse* tradition, the rural movement envisioned common political goals of local participation and influence, consequently becoming an

important and contentious factor in regional politics. Forsberg demonstrates the occurrence of a turn away from political engagement after the introduction of generous European structural funds upon Sweden's joining of the European Union. These resources were accompanied by rhetoric focused on consensus-making, entrepreneurship, and economic growth, in contrast to the original impetus for the movement. Pursuing such financing, the rural movement internalized not only the imposed foreign terminology but also a view of its own activities as economic rather than political; it was thus unable to maintain political claims that challenge urbanization as the norm and bring attention to specifically rural issues.

The chapters in this first part demonstrate that, regardless of their origins—state grants and subventions, philanthropic donations, or market-driven entrepreneurialism—external resources arrive with a set of constraints that may go to the core of organizational identity, mission, and working methods. They necessitate adherence to explicitly or implicitly stated conditions for applications, project management logic, or marketing instruments, thus also blurring the lines between civil society, state, and market. Whether these processes take place in an authoritarian context in which the state remains the main source of legitimate financing or in a democratic setting with a plurality of domestic and international stakeholders, civil society organizations in all three countries must either accommodate pressures or resist them by rejecting certain types of funding. Both reactions come with costs to organizations' autonomy or stability, their potential for political contentiousness, or their potential to establish long-term goals.

Part II: External Constraints and Facilitators of Resources

Picking up the topic of mobilization around the consequences of urbanization in her chapter "From local to digital and back: E-resourcefulness among urban movements in Poland," Anna Domaradzka reviews the emergence and development of Polish urban activism. The author probes the movements' resourcefulness in drawing upon the global social justice movement, using opportunities, and overcoming barriers as they engage

in a broad range of activities varying from local community organizing to mass protest events. The movements' access to resources is conditioned by the bottom-up and contentious nature of their mobilizing. They not only recognize and speak for the specificities of urban residents' interests, but also distance themselves from professionalized civil society organizations, NGO "zombies." Domaradzka uses the case of the Urban Movements Congress to demonstrate how online resources in this context, including websites, blogs, and social media profiles, have become an important source of building identity, maintaining relations, generating funding, and even coordinating nationwide political and lobbying efforts.

The differentiation among civil society actors that Domaradzka notes in Poland—those representing (often informal) grassroots urban initiatives and those from "establishment" organizations—can likewise be observed in other national contexts. In "Between autonomy and compliance: The organizational development of Russian civil society," Vsevolod Bederson and Andrei Semenov draw a fragmented landscape resulting from the selective application of preferences and restrictions to civil society organizations. The authors expand on Skokova and Fröhlich's observation of a state's seeking legitimacy by offering access to funding while at the same time dictating organizational conduct with regard to representation, activities, and accountability. As the tradeoff between loyalty and autonomy has become the fundamental prerequisite for engaging in civil society in Russia today, organizations navigate the costs of operating in such a context in different ways. In its response to the government's crackdown on autonomous sources of funding, including foreign, corporate, and individual donations, civil society has fallen into disparate organizational niches according to scope of, and overall access to, resources.

As the landscape of civil society is gradually reshaped, new cracks and voids appear, opening space for the emergence of new organizations. Meanwhile, old organizations attempt to reconquer their lost domains, appeal to new audiences, address new issues, and invent new instruments of outreach and influence. Lisa Kings, in her chapter "Navigating contemporary developments in Swedish civil society: The case of Save the Children Sweden," focuses on strategic approaches developed by one of Sweden's most prominent civil society organizations in response to pressures originating from collaborations with the private and public sectors.

Exploring two specific projects carried out by Save the Children Sweden in marginalized urban areas, the study utilizes the concept of *avant-garde professionalism* to capture organizations' efforts to develop new forms of community work and to pressure national, regional, and local authorities and other organizations to acknowledge their responsibility for social welfare.

In the subsequent chapter, "Humane resources? The people behind Polish civil society organizations," Galia Chimiak recasts the topic of the influence of organizational environment with a unique perspective on human resources. The chapter rejects mainstream academic emphases on civic mobilization and organization as responses to a *collective* need or as manifestations of *group* interests left unsatisfied by public or market actors. Chimiak's original contribution lies in her assertion that *individuals'* personal norms, motivations, and engagement preferences constitute a complex and dynamic resource for civil society organizations. This, in turn, is shaped by broader societal norms for civic participation and overall working conditions, but also by the norms associated with other resources. Chimiak supports her argument by positing that project-based funding processes not only hinder strategic planning (including for funding), as other authors in this volume have indicated, but create a specific type of work ethos conducive to personal maturation and professionalization rather than the communitarianism and solidarity that drove the Polish Velvet Revolution. Bureaucratic hierarchization, exploitation, and harassment practices add further inequalities within as well as among civil society organizations.

While the first part of this book demonstrates that the mechanisms of dependence and autonomy are embedded in the nature of resources, the chapters gathered in the second part expand on this position by revealing that, when institutional frameworks limit the scope of or access to resources, civil society organizations find the capacity not only to absorb the costs associated with those resources, but to negotiate and contest barriers and generate opportunities to access resources or compensate for their lack. Thus, organizational resourcefulness emerges as a manifestation of agency in interaction with institutional norms regarding access to resources. This resourcefulness is achieved in a variety of ways, resulting in fragmentation between and among organizations but also stimulating

organizational innovation, growth, and expansion. Even in the most restrictive, shrinking spaces for civil society, organizations find ways to emerge, survive, and respond to society's need for democratic participation and social welfare.

Part III: Organizations and Resources: Intertwined Transformations

In their chapter, "Doing the right things or doing things right? Exploring the relationship between professional autonomy and resources in volunteering," Cecilia Gullberg and Noomi Weinryb focus on volunteering efforts by health care professionals during the influx of refugees from the Middle East into Sweden in the autumn of 2015. The authors frame professional knowledge and practice standards as an organizational resource. The volunteers included in the study provided medical assistance to refugees, at first as an informal network that autonomously generated a common mode of conduct and pooled its own financial contributions to fund medical supplies and equipment. Subsequently, they moved under the aegis of two formal civil society organizations, receiving a more stable provision of material resources while becoming subject to organizational guidelines and norms in the form of control and regulation of identity, licensing, privacy, and scheduling. Gullberg and Weinryb conclude that professional expertise and discretion, as well as the costs and benefits they generate for the purpose of organizing, are applied differently in the contexts of profession-based autonomy and bureaucracy-rooted legitimacy, rendering them contingent on organizational setting.

Further linking resources and organizational dynamics, Zhanna Kravchenko's chapter, "Liberty, loyalty, and solidarity: The role of transnational, national, and local resources in voluntary organizations in Russia," traces the transformation of volunteer work as organizational resource in the context of the transformation of Russian civil society over the past 25 years. By examining a community-based association and a charity organization established in St. Petersburg in the late 1980s and early 1990s, respectively, this study links the structures and processes that

integrate volunteering into the organizational fabric with an overall structure of resource mobilization patterns and opportunity structures. The study demonstrates how, throughout their history, the two organizations have accumulated resources from sources at the local, national, and transnational levels, converting them into charitable activities for socially vulnerable population groups and into capacity-building activities for other organizations engaged with volunteering, thus embedding them in complex organizational networks. The author argues that when intertwining takes place in an organization, resources related to different levels of spatiality generate distinct patterns of norms, structures, and activities that do not necessarily align with each other and that have the potential to transform the organization's mission.

At the center of the subsequent chapter, titled "Resources shifting values: Online and offline resources in Swedish civil society," is the distinction between online and offline resources. Although this distinction is often invoked in contemporary studies of social mobilization, authors Håkan Johansson and Gabriella Scaramuzzino posit that it requires both clearer conceptualization and sharper contrast. It connotes different modes of individual stakeholders' engagement with an organization: members, employees, and volunteers contributing to everyday operations *offline* and sympathizers, followers, and members of digital communities expressing their commitment through likes, post shares, and petitions *online*. This distinction also points to varying spatial and temporal thresholds for engagement: the requirement of proximity and synchronicity for in-person meetings offline and the lack thereof online. The study demonstrates the instability of online "clicktivism" relative to offline participation as well as the greater difficulty of online operating with economic resources. Online activism yields lower costs, but it also has fewer instruments for accountability and transparency at its disposal. More importantly, digitally mobilized civic initiatives entail imitating or even establishing offline organizations in order to convert online support into political influence and achieve greater organizational stability.

Part III concludes with the chapter "St. Petersburg LGBTQI+ activists negotiating financial and symbolic resources," in which Pauliina Lukinmaa examines how civic activism by and on behalf of one of the most marginalized groups in the Russian population is both possible and sustained,

even when legitimate resources are scarce and the institutional context is hostile. The author brings an invaluable anthropological perspective to the evolution of symbolic resources such as shared identities, forms of expression, and participation outside of formal organizational boundaries by examining their roles in the discourse of culture and belonging. The study identifies the importance of safety and sensitivity to personal space for practices of artistic expression and recognizes context-specific expertise as central to the survival of LGBTQI+ activism in Russia. Moreover, this expertise empowers local activists vis-à-vis the global/transnational symbols and practices that accompany financial resources. The resourcefulness that the study explores is regarded as a potential asset for global LGBTQI+ organizing and as an echo (if not a direct continuation) of long-established traditions of Soviet underground culture.

The final part of this volume presents the multifaceted nature of resources—their material and immaterial dimensions, their ability to be converted, and their potential not only to elicit organizational change, as argued in the early part of the book, but also to metamorphose as a result of organizational development. This collection expands our understanding of organizations' resourcefulness as an outcome of their capacity to balance the costs and benefits of accepting and rejecting specific types of resources, to navigate the opportunities in and barriers to accessing those resources, to generate them, and to imbue them with meaning. Studying civil society's response to external pressures to conform to state and market rationales through the lens of resources sheds new light on its resilience and organizational innovation. Apostolis Papakostas' epilogue highlights the volume's contribution to established theoretical paradigms and develops the author's own analytical framework for the analysis of the polymorphous role resources play for civil society organizations.

Notes

1. It goes without saying that the civil societies of the three studied countries encompass organizations of various values, orientations, purposes, and identities beyond those of the three examples given in this chapter. Finding and exploring comparative data on the cross-national organizational composition of civil society is a significant challenge. Our own efforts have

revealed that one of the major reasons for this is that different countries use different criteria to distinguish between types of organizations. First, it is important to note that Russian and Polish legislation does not use the term “civil society organizations.” Rather, it differentiates between nongovernmental and not-for-profit organizations. These overlap partially, thus sometimes equating nongovernmental nonprofits with state-run or corporation-based nonprofits. This is important in terms of both cross-national comparisons and the gathering of statistical information. Here, we compare the legal categorizations in our selected countries before introducing the methodological approach to the classification of civil society organizations applied in this book.

In Poland, two broad categories of not-for-profit nongovernmental organizations are recognized: associations (*stowarzyszenia*) and foundations (*fundacje*). These are governed by specific normative acts, and those that carry out various types of social and charity work (Council on Foundations, 2016) are also eligible for Public Benefit Organization (*organizacja pożytku publicznego, OPP*) status. We find the same categories, as well as religious communions and charities, in Russia and Sweden. Moreover, the status of Socially Oriented NGO that Russian organizations can achieve is similar to that of the Polish OPP, although it is not legally formalized and exists only as a part of discursive practice in policy documents. In Russia, civil society organizations can also be registered as communities of minor indigenous peoples (*obshchiny korennykh malochislennykh narodov*) and Cossack communities (*kazach'i obshchestva*) (Federal Law No. 7-FZ “On nonprofit organizations”). In Sweden, there are also public corporations (*offentliga korporationer och anstalter*), community associations (*samfälligheter*), and organizations with the purpose of providing economic assistance (*ekonomiska föreningar, bostadsrättsföreningar, kooperativa hyresgästföreningar, understödsföreningar, försäkringsföreningar, arbetslöshetskassor*) (Statistics Sweden, 2018).

Countries recognize that non-profit activities are not necessarily carried out by nongovernmental organizations and that nongovernmental organizations are not necessarily not-for-profit. They may therefore be equated in status to nongovernmental nonprofits. For instance, in Russia, NGO status can be conferred on state corporations (*gosudarstvennaia korporatsiia*), state companies (*gosudarstvennaia kompaniia*), nonprofit partnerships (*nekommercheskie partnerstva*), and even private, state, municipal, and budget institutions (*chastnye, gosudarstvennye, munitsipal'nye i biudzhethnye uchrezhdeniia*). In Sweden, a civil society organization may be

legally registered as a stock company (*aktiebolag*). Trade unions, however, are generally legally excluded from the category of not-for-profit/nongovernmental organizations, although they are recognized as part of civil society by international nomenclature (e.g., UNDP, 2013).

While some similarities between legal categorizations can be observed, the differences exist not only in the national specificity of some legal categories but, more importantly, in the divergences and inconsistencies in statistical record systems. These make comparisons based on official data virtually impossible. For instance, the category of professional NGOs exists only in Russian records, while it disappears behind the term “associations” in Swedish and Polish statistical reviews. In contrast, the foundation, a fundamentally important organizational type that is clearly distinguished in Polish and Swedish records, is equated with “autonomous nonprofits” in Russian official statistics. Business and professional associations accounted for in Polish statistics are likely to be absorbed by “autonomous nonprofits” in Russia and considered trade unions in Sweden. Even the nomenclature for religious organizations varies enough to suggest that differences in semantics may lead to differences in statistics: faith-based charities in Poland, religious organizations in Russia, and faith-based communions in Sweden. Moreover, it has become common knowledge, often repeated in the literature on Russian civil society, that the number of officially registered organizations is usually greater than the number that are actually active (e.g., Salamon et al., 2015, p. 2185).

Without reliable comparative aggregated data, it is impracticable to describe the variation of organizational types in Russia, Poland, and Sweden in any meaningful terms. We therefore refrain from endeavoring to do so and from attempting to impose any strict definition or categorization of civil society organizations to be systematically used across all chapters.

2. Federal Law No. 121-FZ “On amendments to specific legal acts of the Russian Federation with regard to regulation of activities of nonprofit organizations performing functions of ‘foreign agents,’” 20 June 2012. According to the law, NPOs that receive resources (including but not limited to monetary assets) from international sources must register as “foreign agents” if they also engage in political activities.
3. In addition to the heritage of people’s movements (*folkrörelse*), philanthropic and aid organizations as well as leisure and cultural associations have been an important part of the civic landscape shaping the strong secular character of Swedish society as a whole (Svedberg, 2005).

4. When approaching the similarities and differences in institutional access to different types of resources for civil society organizations in Russia, Poland, and Sweden, we face a significant challenge not unlike that inherent in examining the distribution of different types of organizations. Firstly, not all resources can be expressed in quantifiable terms. Secondly, even for those resources that can be quantified, there are no systematic estimations on an aggregated level. For instance, we can establish that the scope of state funding of civil society organizations is similar in all three countries, totaling about 1% of GDP (authors' calculations based on data from Departament Ekonomii Społecznej i Solidarnej, 2012, p. 32; Konkurrensverket, 2017, p. 124; Ministry of Economic Development, 2017; OECD, 2017; Regeringen, 2019, pp. 230, 243; World Bank, 2017). This includes project-based grants, subsidies, and procurements. In Sweden, the share of project-based funding is approximately equal to that of the share of public procurements, while in Russia, the scope of procurements is somewhat smaller and amounts to about 35%. As regards human resources, earlier studies have demonstrated that nonprofits in Russia usually employ personnel on a paid basis (ca. 75% of NGO personnel are paid) and comprise about 0.87% of the economically active population (Jakobson et al., 2011, pp. 25–26). Nonprofit personnel in Poland comprise 11.1% and in Sweden 16.7% of the economically active population (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2018, pp. 76–77); a mere 19.5% and 35% of these, respectively, are paid (authors' calculations based on Salamon & Sokolowski, 2018, pp. 76–77).

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Part I

Resources as Constraints



2

Pecunia olet: The Funding Dilemma for Think Tanks in Poland

Katarzyna Jezierska

Think tanks are a special type of civil society organization engaged in research and advocacy. Sometimes called policy advice institutions, they are elite organizations producing and delivering social analysis to policy-makers and the wider public. Their aim is to influence policy in a given direction. Think tanks are “boundary organizations,” or intermediaries between different social spheres such as politics, the market, the media, academia (Medvetz, 2012), and civil society (Jezierska, 2018). They use their access to each of these spheres to reach their goal of influencing policymakers. Think tanks declare themselves detached from any vested interest, and they do not aspire to represent the broader society. Their “assertion of a voice in the policy-making process is based on their claim to expertise rather than as a vox populi” (Weaver & McGann, 2000, p. 17). Unlike lobby organizations, think tanks claim to base their analyses and policy recommendations on independent expertise without representing commercial interests. Hence, the image of independence is crucial for think tanks (Jezierska, 2018; Jezierska & Sörbom, 2021).

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This chapter focuses on how the image of independence rhymes with economic resources in think tanks. Economic resources are think tanks' most immediate and arguably most important resource type. Although other resources, such as human (staff), symbolic (brand), and social (connections) are also very significant to the work of think tanks, in most cases, these are strongly linked to the economic resources that a given institution holds. A think tank cannot employ and retain competent staff, sustain networks with various crucial actors, or gain media visibility unless it can finance these endeavors. Think tanks' main activities are concentrated on social analysis. Relying on existing and in-house research, they produce various types of reports and books which are then submitted as policy recommendations to decision makers. This requires costly and highly specialized personnel, many of whom have university degrees. In this sense, think tanks differ from other civil society organizations described in this volume whose main domains of action might not require the same extent of economic resources.

Shortage, or "the debilitating effects of limited funding," is frequently mentioned as the main obstacle to the development of a thriving think tank community in a given country (James, 1993; Struyk, 1999; 't Hart & Vromen, 2008). Diane Stone (2005) observed that the best-known think tanks in the world generally cherish stable sources of funding that help them secure at least 20 researchers among their employees. This does not, however, mean that a "richer" think tank is always more influential than a "poorer" one. The argument is not crudely materialist, suggesting that money simply trumps all other forms of resources. We know from empirical studies that well-funded institutions might choose poor strategies for promoting their policy recommendations or be so tightly linked to a single political actor that their access to policymakers from other parties is blocked, thus blunting their potential influence. It is also known (e.g., Stone, 2005; Thunert, 2008) that the vast majority of think tanks across the globe operate with relatively small staffs and budgets.

Regardless of the centrality of economic resources for any given institution, funding creates a dilemma for think tanks. The source of funding is as important, and can even be more important, than its amount. In other words, more funding is not always a desirable solution if it comes from compromising sources. This may be the case with politically tainted

sponsors or simply when a think tank receives too much funding from one source, creating unwanted dependencies. In truth, this often applies to other civil society organizations as well; they need to finance their activities and also want to remain independent. Nevertheless, think tanks are especially illustrative of this dilemma as they require more funding while the appearance of independence is so crucial to what they do. Think tanks' access to policymakers and the broader public is based on the image of independent expertise that they manage to uphold (Jeziarska & Sörbom, 2021), and suspicions of economic dependence immediately compromise that image. To be clear, independence for think tanks lies more in the realm of constructed perceptions than actual autonomy.

This chapter aims to investigate how think tanks navigate the funding dilemma. How do they negotiate the image of independence with the need for funding and the demands of their donors (be they private or public)? The empirical illustration of this dilemma is taken from a document analysis of annual reports and interviews with Polish think tankers.¹ The concrete research questions are: (1) What is the structure of funding of Polish think tanks? and (2) How do think tanks reason with regard to funding and independence? This chapter is structured as follows: a short introduction of previous literature on think tanks' economic resources is followed by the details of the methods applied in this study. The analysis of the structure of funding of think tanks and dilemmas connected to funding is preceded by a background section about the historical development of think tanks in Poland.

Economic Resources and Think Tanks

Existing research on advocacy organizations, think tanks included, focuses on various factors that shape funding schemes in a given context, different combinations of sources used by civil society organizations, and the effects of funding for organizations in terms of their missions and internal structures. Neumayr et al. (2015), in a solid review of existing research on funding in nonprofit advocacy organizations, claimed that this literature is highly inconclusive. On one hand, several studies draw on resource dependence theory, arguing that funding (mostly public)

creates dependencies that lead to limitations in or even blocking of organizations' advocacy activities for fear of losing their funding in the future (see, for example, Arvidson et al., 2018; Skokova & Fröhlich, Chap. 3 in this volume). On the other hand, reverse effects are observed by those applying the notion of organizational capacity building, who claim that civil society organizations with public funding actually increase their engagement in advocacy (see Neumayr et al., 2015). This outcome is explained by publicly sponsored civil society organizations' pursuit of more resources in general and also by their gaining access to government through the very process of obtaining funding. That access can later be used for advocacy purposes. The concrete direction of the impact of (public) funding—whether it increases or decreases advocacy activity—is of less consequence for the purposes of this chapter; the important lesson is that funding sources clearly affect these institutions' activities.

The issue of how think tanks, a specific type of civil society organization, are funded and how that funding influences their actions has been at the center of think tank scholarship. Think tanks in the anglophone world have been the dominant focus in the literature, with a prevalence of studies on U.S. think tanks; existing knowledge of think tanks is therefore mostly limited to these. Think tanks in other parts of the world have been investigated much less frequently, and they sometimes differ greatly from their American counterparts; not only funding schemes, but also organizational structure, functions, and sociopolitical position are different. The firmest conclusion that we can draw from the existing research is that there are stark divergences in patterns of think tank funding across contexts. While U.S. think tanks usually rely on private donations (Abelson, 2019; Medvetz, 2012), German think tanks are mostly sponsored by various levels of the state (Thunert, 2008), and at least in the early years of transformation, Central and Eastern European think tanks typically depended on foreign funding (Struyk, 1999). A study of the economic resources of Canadian think tanks (McLevey, 2014) revealed that some interesting differences in funding patterns depend on the ideological profile of the think tank. Apparently, conservative think tanks are predominantly funded by private donors, while centrist think tanks are funded by the state. Furthermore, in Canada, private and public funding are only seldom combined in a single organization. This dispersed picture

makes it hard to draw any general conclusions about the dominant sources of think tank funding. Rather, it indicates that existing scholarship should be applied to any given empirical context with caution.

Regardless of think tanks' funding sources, research from the U.S. and Canada has established a strong correlation between their budgets and their media visibility. In lieu of other easily accessible measures, media visibility is commonly used as an indicator of think tanks' impact, hence the conclusion that levels of financing are crucial to impact (e.g., Abelson, 2009). This finding, obviously, is not observed as a straightforward causal relationship. Abelson (2009) posited that external factors, such as political opportunity structure, as well as internal ones, including think tank leadership and chosen strategies, might be more important for creating impact than budget size.

When the effects of funding on think tank activities are studied, we can expect to encounter the main tenets of dependence theory. Oftentimes, observations about difficulties attracting generic or core funding for statutory activities and reliance on grants and contracts for specific work are interpreted as immediately implying "a demand-led policy agenda" (James, 1993, p. 500), thus revealing assumptions from dependence theory. In the Central and Eastern European context, Ivan Krastev has argued that funding reflects on the agenda of the think tanks to the extent that "key words of the donors are easily traced in the conference titles and research projects" (Krastev, 2001, p. 21). One such formulation, allegedly traced to U.S. funding, is "promotion of civil society development" as a mission statement in think tanks; another, after a shift from U.S. to EU funding, is a "more intense engagement with EU priorities" (Stark et al., 2006, p. 330; see also Císař & Navrátil, 2015). Some commentators go so far as to question the possibility of independent think tank analysis at all:

[T]he growing influence of funding institutions such as governments, foundations, international lending organizations and others leads to questions as to whether think tanks can produce independent policy analysis that does not, in some way, reflect the perspectives and interests of their donors. (McGann & Johnson, 2005, p. 13)

Although available funding sources and amounts vary greatly across contexts, the dilemma created by the need for funding in order to fulfil their missions and the concomitant risk of creating dependencies seems to be a universal concern for think tanks. Following resource dependence theory, the recipe across the literature for mitigating the risk of “external ownership” appears to be diversification of the funding base (e.g., Stone, 2005; see also Froelich, 1999 on civil society organizations more generally). According to resource dependency theory, the more important the resources from a given source, the more dependent the organization becomes on that source. However, dependency decreases as the number of alternative resource providers increases (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). While diversification is usually seen as a desirable solution, in some cases, particular forms or sources of funding (e.g., state funding) are rejected altogether in order to preserve perceived independence (Gonzalez Hernando & Williams, 2018, p. 197; Jezierska & Sörbom, 2021).

In sum, studies of think tanks rely broadly on resource dependence theory when discussing economic resources. Admittedly, the more general research on nonprofit advocacy organizations also highlights the contrasting effects of resources as boosting these organizations’ capacity-building potential. The less developed and less geographically diversified literature on economic resources in think tanks appears to embrace resource dependency theory uncritically; it focuses on strategies to alleviate the perception of dependence. In its current shape, the literature gives us very limited knowledge about think tank financing beyond the anglophone world. With its focus on economic resources in Polish think tanks, this chapter endeavors to fill the gap. Thus, its contribution is both empirical and theoretical, aiming also at a partial revision of some tenets of resource dependency theory.

Think Tanks in Poland

The numbers of think tanks in different countries vary greatly. Due to definitional problems (see, for example, Stone & Denham, 2004), there is no fully reliable directory of think tanks, but the one most often referred to is the Go To Think Tank Index, based on peer and expert assessments

and released yearly. The index for 2018 (McGann, 2019) reports 1871 think tanks in the United States, which tops the list, and 321 for the UK, the think tank-richest European country. Poland, with its 60 think tanks, appears second on the list for Central and Eastern Europe after Russia, for which the report indicates 215 think tanks. Sweden, according to the report, has 90 think tanks. When corrected for the population of the three countries of interest in this book, Sweden takes the lead, with nine think tanks per 1 million inhabitants, while Russia and Poland rank significantly lower with Russia's 1.9 think tanks per 1 million inhabitants and Poland's 1.6.

Think tanks are a relatively new institution in Poland and Central Europe. One might identify proto-think tanks among organizations from the state-socialist period (1945–1989); however, given the conditions of policymaking under communist rule, these institutions were heavily controlled by the party and did not aspire to even the appearance of independence. Since 1989 and the shift to liberal democracy, the pluralist model has been adopted in Poland (Czaputowicz & Stasiak, 2012), opening the way for non-governmental actors' engagement in policymaking. In line with what Struyk (1999) reported in a study of Bulgaria, Armenia, Russia, and Hungary, it was also the case in Poland that Western governments' and foundations' support for think tanks (and civil society organizations more broadly) was apparent from the first months of the transition, that is, after 1989. As a result of the steady flow of foreign funding combined with the regained right to associate freely, the early 1990s were a time of blooming for the non-governmental sector, including expert organizations. After the first wave of think tanks was launched in the early to mid-1990s, their number oscillated around 40, which was among the most of any country in the region. Among the more active think tanks during that time were CASE—Center for Social and Economic Research (*CASE—Centrum Analiz Społeczno-Ekonomicznych*), founded in Warsaw in 1991, and the Institute for Market Economy Research (*Instytut Badań nad Gospodarką Rynkową*), founded in Gdańsk in 1989. Both specialize in economic analysis and have been rather active in promoting the neo-liberal orientation of reforms in Poland as well as in other Eastern European countries. Their successes were clearly shown by the hegemonic discourse of the no-alternative approach to the shock therapy style of

transition (e.g., Ost, 2000; Woś, 2014). Another important institution from that early period is the Batory Foundation (*Fundacja Batorego*), launched in Warsaw in 1988. Batory quickly became the go-to foundation supporting a variety of newly created NGOs in Poland and beyond. It also developed its own in-house social analysis unit and, in line with the will of its funder, George Soros, assisted in the transition to an open, liberal society. Yet another institution, the Institute of Public Affairs (*Instytut Spraw Publicznych*), founded in 1995, has managed to establish itself as a think tank producing analysis and advising policymakers on a variety of issues linked to EU integration and the centrist–liberal agenda in Poland.

A second wave of new think tanks appeared around 2015, when the nationalist right-wing party Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) came to power, initiating a shift to the so-called illiberal democracy in Poland. At the time of this writing in 2020, there are approximately 70 think tanks in the country. Many of the new organizations share the ruling party’s ideological orientation and push for the promotion of conservative and Catholic policy solutions. The Institute for Legal Culture Ordo Iuris (*Instytut na rzecz Kultury Prawnej Ordo Iuris*) is the prime example of this. The organization was founded in 2013 and has been very active both in Poland and internationally (e.g., at UN fora), advocating, for instance, anti-abortion and anti-LGBTQI+ regulations.

In comparison to better-known cases from the anglophone world, however, the actual involvement of Polish think tanks in policymaking is rather limited (Biskup & Schöll-Mazurek, 2018; Cadier & Sus, 2017). There are surely some spectacular cases of successes in promoting given policy solutions, also by the abovementioned think tanks, but on the whole, think tanks lack the systematic channels needed to influence policymaking in Poland (Jezierska, 2021). Those who succeed must be resourceful and find original paths to the ears of powerholders. Think tankers usually blame their relatively meager impact on the “immaturity” of the Polish political class (Jezierska, 2021), which results in a lack of such systemic routes for expert organizations and only sporadic use of policy advice. Nevertheless, think tanks have arrived as a given part of the Polish political scene, and some manage to gain considerable media attention.

In addition to their main activities, that is, attempts at influencing policymakers based on the social analysis they produce, think tanks sometimes take on an explicit leadership role vis-à-vis Polish civil society. They often indicate the “promotion of civil society” or “development of the public sphere” as part of their mission (cf. Jeziarska, 2017), and they provide training, distribute funding, and offer other types of support for smaller civil society organizations. However, think tanks’ positions with respect to the broader civil society are somewhat ambiguous (Jeziarska, 2020). Although they usually take the legal form of either foundations or associations, as do other non-governmental organizations in Poland, some think tanks distance themselves from civil society, stressing the distinctive functions that think tanks perform as knowledge producers and experts. A few think tanks embrace the civil society identity, underscoring it with their use of the label “think-and-do tanks.” In this way, they stress the activist component of what they do, combining advocacy and expert functions with community engagement (Jeziarska, 2021).

To study the funding dilemma of think tanks and thus arrive at an understanding of how these institutions construct their image of independence, this chapter is based on two types of data: think tanks’ annual reports and interviews with think tank leaders. The document analysis of a purposive sample of Polish think tanks’ annual reports focuses on budgets and sources of funding. The reports were extracted from the webpages of think tanks and, if these were not available on the webpages, through email contact with think tanks. The newest available annual reports (whenever possible, from 2017) were collected. Fifteen think tanks with varied budget sizes were selected, including small, medium, and large institutions (see Table 2.1). All of these think tanks are recognizable in the Polish public sphere. Additionally, in order to answer the research question regarding think tanks’ reasoning around economic resources and independence, interview data were collected. Fourteen interviews with think tankers representing nine think tanks (varying with respect to size of staff, budget, ideology, and issue area) were conducted.

The financial data was rather difficult to obtain. While some Polish think tanks are very open about their sponsors and list the names of public, corporate, and private donors, sometimes even linking these to concrete projects that they conduct with the help of funds from particular

Table 2.1 Think tanks selected for the study: an overview

			Size			
Foundation year	Legal form	Location	Main field of activity	Ideological leaning	Number of employees 2017 ^a	Size of budget 2017 (in euros)
Allerhand Institute	Foundation	Cracow	Legal and economic policy	Liberal, free market	7	>500,000 (2016)
Civic Institute	No legal form ^b	Warsaw	Various policies	Centrist, liberal	4	>500,000 ^c
Sobieski Institute	Foundation	Warsaw	Various policies	Conservative	4	<500,000
Center for Social and Economic Research	Foundation	Warsaw	Economic and social policy	Liberal, free market	22	500,000–1M
Civil Development Forum	Foundation	Warsaw	Economic policy	Liberal, free market	22	500,000–1M
Institute for Legal Culture Ordo Iuris	Foundation	Warsaw	Legal policy	Conservative, Catholic	21	500,000–1M
Jagiellonian Club's Centre for Analysis ^d	Association/Foundation	Cracow	Civil society & public debate	Conservative, republican	3/4	500,000–1M
Institute for Market Economy Research	Foundation	Gdańsk	Economic policy	Liberal, free market	26	1M > 2M
Institute of Public Affairs	Foundation	Warsaw	Various policies	Centrist, liberal	25	1M–2M

Stanislaw Brzozowski Association/The Institute for Advanced Study ^e	2005/2012	Association	Warsaw	Cultural policy	Progressive	33	1M–2M
Shipyard—Centre for Social Innovation and Research	2009	Foundation	Warsaw	Civil society and public debate	Centrist, liberal	31	1M–2M
The Polish Institute of International Affairs	1996	State institute	Warsaw	Foreign policy	Government-affiliated	83	1M–2M
WiseEuropa	2016 ^f	Foundation	Warsaw	Economic and foreign policy	Liberal	12	1M–2M
Centre for Eastern Studies	1991 ^g	State institute	Warsaw	Foreign policy	Government-affiliated	60	2M–3M
Batory Foundation	1988	Foundation	Warsaw	Civil society and public debate	Centrist, liberal	34	>3M

^aIn some cases, even this basic information was difficult to obtain. On their websites, the organizations do not always clearly distinguish between employees and collaborators or external experts. In their financial reports, they sometimes state only the number of in-house experts, excluding the remaining staff. An additional problem is associated with the complex employment structure of some think tanks; some organizations mention number of employees and others list number of full-time equivalents (taking into account the rather common circumstance of part-time employment).

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

- ^bThere is no legal regulation of party think tanks in Poland, which is why the Civic Institute has no distinguishable legal form and exists in a legal vacuum.
- ^cThe law on political parties stipulates, without further specifications, that at least 5% of yearly party subsidies must be dedicated to an expert fund. The total budget of the Institute comes from donations from the Civic Platform Party. However, the Civic Platform Party's financial report reveals that even though they donated only 5% of their subsidies to the expert fund (i.e., 774,000 PLN) in 2017, they actually spent 5,826,000 PLN on expertise. It is impossible to say how large a share of this amount was invested in expertise from Civic Platform.
- ^dWithin the Jagiellonian Club, there is also a subunit called the Center of Urban Studies (Ośrodek Studiów o Mieście) that performs think-and-do tank activities and provides analyses on urban issues.
- ^eThis is the umbrella legal structure for the better-recognized organization Political Critique.
- ^fWiseEuropa is a merger between two previously existing think tanks: WISE Institute and demosEUROPA.
- ^gThe Centre for Eastern Studies changed its legal status in 2011 based on a special law. It is now a state institute reporting directly to the prime minister.

donors, many organizations refuse to reveal their sources of financing, giving very general or no information about them. Moreover, among those that publish funding data, there is no unified blueprint for annual reports; each think tank designs its own way of reporting, which may also change over time. It is for this reason that, in a few cases, earlier reports were consulted to obtain more elaborate data about funding and independence. Think tanks' clandestineness about funding is not a uniquely Polish phenomenon (see a reference to similar problems in the case of the UK in Gonzalez Hernando & Williams, 2018), but it does contrast starkly with the Canadian and U.S. systems, under which think tanks publish yearly financial reports with specifications about different types of funding and donors in the interest of retaining tax exemptions and charity status.

Based on the original data described above, the next sections analyze first the structure of Polish think tanks' funding and then their more in-depth reasoning about how they balance funding and independence. This allows us to reach conclusions about how the studied think tanks solve the funding dilemma and how they relate to economic resources.

Structure of Think Tank Funding

Apart from “deaf ears” on the receiving, political end, think tankers point to economic instability as the biggest hurdle to their work. One of the think tankers interviewed asked with irony: “What would we even talk about if we didn't talk about the money?” (Interview, Shipyard). Only a few Polish think tanks boast endowments that secure their economic situations. In most cases, think tanks resort to various forms of external funding. They must be resourceful as they maneuver in an environment that is relatively unfavorable to their activities. Furthermore, as previous research has observed, reliance on external funding increases competition. Think tanks compete for funding with other think tanks and with for-profit private sector organizations conducting analytical work—as well as with research units within ministries, which policymakers might perceive as less expensive than outside contractors (Struyk, 1999). As such, “[a]s a rule of thumb, think tanks are competing with the same

institutes with whom they also cooperate” (Thunert, 2008, p. 49), preventing them from building a strong sense of think tank community.

Financial weakness in general and income instability over time were repeatedly mentioned in the interviews. Foreign democracy assistance, mostly from the U.S., receded in the mid-2000s due to Western donors’ assessment of Poland as a consolidated democracy; this forced think tanks to find alternative sources of capital. The other most important source of funding in the transition period, EU funding (first pre-accession, then structural and project funding), also gradually diminished. Think tanks have thus become increasingly reliant on government funding. This trend mirrors changes in the funding structure of the entire third sector in Poland:

Back in 2014 almost every fourth Polish zloty in the budget of the sector came from EU sources. In 2017, the portion of foreign public sources significantly diminished. [...] At the same time, the share of funding from national and local administration increased. (Klon/Jawor, 2019, p. 44)

There are obviously some exceptions, and several think tanks continue to obtain a large portion of their funding from the EU. The Center for Social and Economic Research stands out in this regard, declaring: “In 2017, the European Union continued to provide the greatest portion of CASE’s revenue. Its share represented 87.2% of project funding” (Annual Report 2017, Center for Social and Economic Research). For most think tanks, however, governmental funding is more important. Since the need for external expertise is not widely recognized by local and national administrations, resourcefulness is required to secure funding. A Batory Foundation representative expressed frustration: “Here [in Poland], it’s a kind of limbo because EU funding can’t be applied for, and philanthropy is either weak or oriented in other directions” (Interview, Batory Foundation). The way out of this limbo, it seems, is to constantly strive for new sources of funding (e.g., commercial activity) as well as diversification of those sources.

With regard to budget size, as indicated in Fig. 2.1, Polish think tanks present huge variation. Some operate with rather small budgets of less than 500,000 EUR (two million PLN) per year, while others have

budgets exceeding 2,000,000 EUR per year (eight million PLN). Such budgets place even the “poorest” think tanks among the “richest” civil society organizations in Poland.² This is not surprising, given that policy analysis and advice are expensive. Both require highly qualified staff and, in some cases, a long-term commitment to conducting the analysis on which policy recommendations are based.

A note of caution needs to be added here. Figure 2.1 presents optimistic figures as, for some of the organizations studied, performing social analysis and policy advice represent only a part of their activities; they

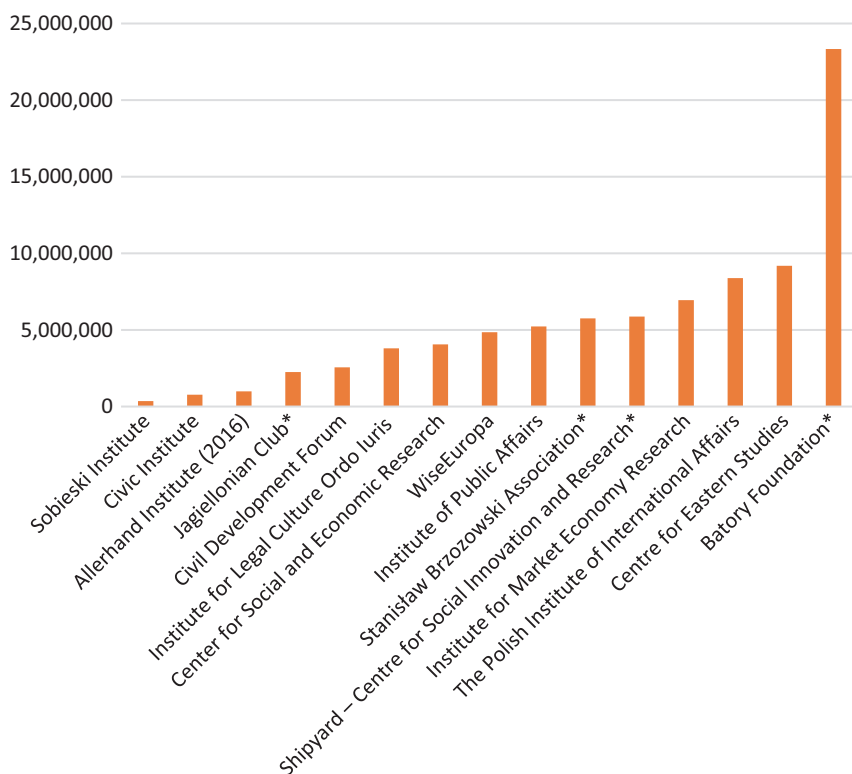


Fig. 2.1 Budgets of selected Polish think tanks in 2017 (PLN). (Source: original research. The asterisks indicate institutions which have think tank activities (research and policy advice) integrated with other types of activities in their budgets)

thus dedicate only a part of their budgets to these ends. While there is no such thing as a “pure” think tank, and all think tanks engage on a more or less regular basis with other types of projects, this hybridity mostly affects the overall budgets of the institutions indicated above (see asterisks in Fig. 2.1). For instance, the Batory Foundation, with the largest budget in the sample, acts principally as a foundation distributing funding to other civil society organizations. It receives significant resources from, for example, Norway Grants, which it later distributes through grant calls. Another complex example is the Stanisław Brzozowski Association, which is the legal unit encompassing such organizations as Political Critique and the Institute for Advanced Study. Only the Institute qualifies as a think tank; the other units engage primarily in cultural and publishing activities. The numbers presented here, however, are the only ones available, as subunits do not figure as independent legal structures and do not file separate financial reports. Thus, in the cases of some organizations, actual funds gathered for and dedicated to policy advice activities alone may be significantly smaller than indicated.

Figure 2.2 illustrates the budget structures of selected Polish think tanks. As is clear, the individual think tanks have chosen different palettes of revenue. Four sources of funding were distinguished in the reports: grants (public and private), donations (corporate and individual), commercial activity, and financial revenue. Three of the studied think tanks receive funding from all four types of sources, while two of them rely exclusively on one type. Given the small sample of think tanks and their different organizational solutions (The Polish Institute of International Affairs, for example, is a government-affiliated institute), it is difficult to discern any trends. However, there seems to be no correlation between number of funding sources and budget size. For a majority of the think tanks in the sample, public and private grants are the dominant source of funding, and for five think tanks in the sample, grants amount to more than 90% of their revenue. Two think tanks rely predominantly on corporate and individual donations, including those from foreign donors. Three of the studied institutions report yet another source of funding—membership fees—but the amounts obtained from this source are so insignificant in their total budgets that they have been removed from Fig. 2.2.

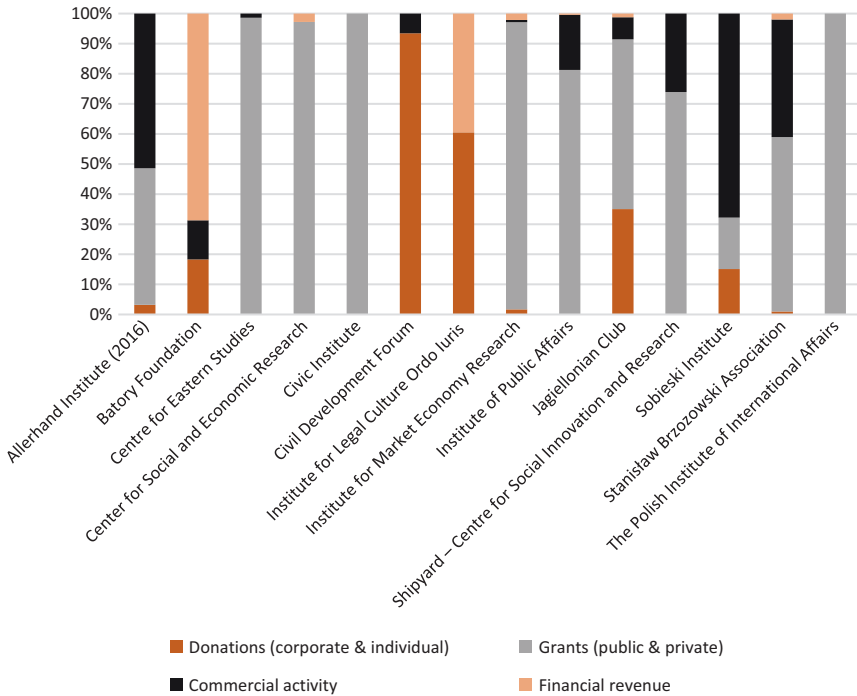


Fig. 2.2 Budget structures of selected Polish think tanks in 2017 (%). (Source: original research)

In order to provide a more easily accessible picture of the structure of funding, Figure 2.3 presents an aggregated budget structure of the organizations selected for this study. Such a presentation obviously contains a bias in the sense that organizations with larger budgets influence the summative results to a greater degree than do those with smaller ones. The disproportionately large budget of the Batory Foundation, and its rather unusual budget structure (with the majority of its funding coming from financial revenue from the endowment), explains the relatively large share of financial revenue in the summative budget of think tanks. It is worth noting that, despite this fact, and even though the Batory Foundation's budget includes no grants, public and private grants constitute the largest share of the summative budget.

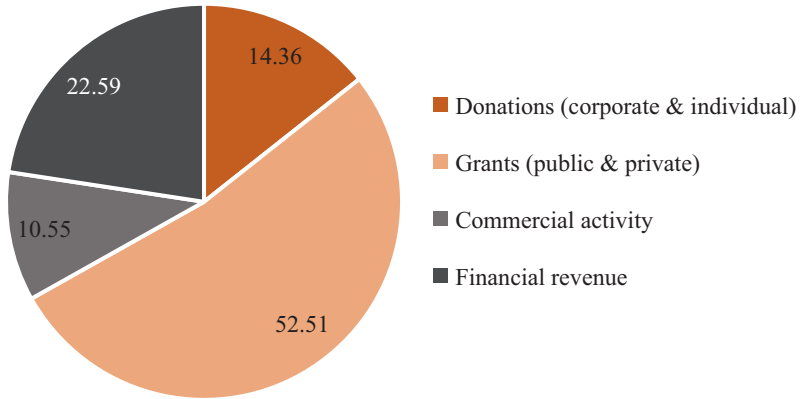


Fig. 2.3 Cumulative sources of funding of selected think tanks (2017) (%). (Source: original research)

In the 2017 summative budget, more than half (52%) of the studied think tanks' economic resources were obtained from project funding through public and private grants. A similar pattern was identified in the UK (Gonzalez Hernando & Williams, 2018). Think tanks, in particular those with relatively large budgets, may be able to source additional funding in the form of financial revenue from bank investments, etc., which constitute the second-largest part of the aggregate budget (23%). Only 14% of the total budget came from corporate and individual donations. This is consistent with common knowledge that philanthropy is rather weak in Poland. In the World Giving Index for 2018, the country ranked 78th in monetary donations to charities, placing it in the middle of the list of countries around the globe. According to the same report, 24% of people in Poland donated money, which is unimpressive when compared to the European average of 37% and given that Poland ranks rather high, twenty-first out of 205 countries, with regard to GDP (World Bank, 2019). When it comes to policy advice organizations, alongside watchdogs, attracting donors is especially difficult for these civil society organizations (Batko-Tołuć & Izdebski, 2012) as they are perceived as rather abstract. Most people have trouble recognizing what think tanks do and would not support activities without very concrete outcomes; donors are more responsive to personalized messages and images of the needy. Yet

another source of funding contributed to the diversification of think tank funding: commercial activity, which amounted to 11% of the summative budget. Commercial activity refers to tasks (such as market analysis for private companies) undertaken in order to secure core functions and staff not currently being financed by other sources.

As we have seen, with regard to budget size, the studied think tanks place ahead of other civil society organizations in Poland. Given that what these organizations do is resource-thirsty, they nevertheless struggle to secure long-term financing of their core activities. The summative budget reveals that the structure of financing is somewhat unbalanced. The majority of funding comes from a multiplicity of smaller and larger project grants, both private and public, and only a few organizations diversify their sources to all four sources of funding. Even those that do are not guaranteed a larger budget than other Polish think tanks. As noted above, although larger budgets can easily be correlated to organizational capacity, budget size is not the whole story; in order to capture the funding dilemma of think tanks, a qualitative analysis of their reasoning about funding and independence is needed.

Funding and Independence

While finding stable sources of funding over time was a common problem identified by the interviewed think tankers, they also pointed to the importance of maintaining independence in the pursuit of necessary funds. Think tanks are keen to uphold an image as free thinkers whose activities are not steered by their funders. They strategically choose to select *adequate* funding that will not compromise their perceived independence. Admittedly, signaling think tank independence requires a broader spectrum of tools, including symbolic resources utilized to maintain academic independence (mimicking academic institutions and ways of conducting analysis) and relational resources to secure political independence (keeping the right distance from the political sphere, which helps them to maintain that their advice qualifies as apolitical expertise) (Jezińska & Sörbom, 2021). However, a crucial component of think tanks' expert image is economic independence, which means that think

tanks also hold funders at a distance, thereby demonstrating that they are at liberty to state their positions without considering the approval or interests of funders. Thus, funding is seen as ambiguous in character and as needing safeguarding in order to avoid diminishing the legitimacy and authority of the think tank.

All think tanks, no matter the sources of their funding, stress that funders do not control their work and that their analyses are independently conducted thanks to a de-coupling of financiers from the actual work of the think tank. Interviewees acknowledged that, at times, this de-coupling is not easy to achieve. One CEO cited some disagreements with founder and original funder George Soros over the focus of the think tank's activities:

Our foundation, just like tens of others in the world, was launched by George Soros. [...] In the beginning, he was the only source of our funding. [...] We have had many conflicts. These were not caused by his ill will but rather by his missionary conviction that he knows better. And often, we fiercely opposed that; we had our own ideas. Let's say that he is an interesting and a difficult man, but he does recognize differences in opinion and does not seek confrontation. However, he did show his dissatisfaction by granting us relatively less money with respect to other foundations. We can say that he did not reward us. (Interview, Batory Foundation)

In general, the studied organizations pointed to two main strategies that they employ to mitigate their dependence on funders. The first strategy is to avoid a specific type of funder that the think tank considers capable of compromising its stated goals. For a centrist liberal think tank, economic resources coming from the state can be the most problematic, as voiced by the CEO of the Batory Foundation: "This was our distinguishing characteristic, that we were very careful to avoid any funding from the state, not to become dependent" (Interview, Batory Foundation). Similarly, the annual report from a market liberal think tank declares that all of its funding comes from individual and corporate donors and that the think tank "does not use government funding, neither does it realize analyses on demand, in order to keep full independence" (Annual Report 2017, Civil Development Forum). The fear expressed here is that taking

money from the state will inhibit the think tank from freely criticizing the government.

And this is a tragedy, that these organizations [who resort to state funding] become part of the establishment. You often see it—it's impossible to take the money from the local government with one hand and criticize its actions with the other. (Interview, Institute of Public Affairs)

For conservative think tanks, by contrast, the same strategy of avoidance might be directed elsewhere. For instance, the CEO of the conservative think tank The Sobieski Institute was keen to discuss historical examples of fatal dependence on foreign powers, stressing the importance of national sovereignty in various forms. “We programmatically avoid foreign funding. That is, we only use it if these funds don't endanger our sovereignty. The political–intellectual sovereignty” (Interview, Sobieski Institute).

A second strategy, and by far the most common one for claiming independence and keeping funders at bay, is diversification of funding sources. In line with positions from resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003), the think tanks studied stressed that diversification permitted their organizations more independent stances. A typical formulation states that “[f]or the activities of the Association, full independence and diversification of sources of funding is crucial” (Annual Report 2017, Stanisław Brzozowski Association). Another think tank reflects on the need to diversify, which leads it to seek commercial activities as additional sources of income:

A challenge for the coming years is even bigger diversification of sources of funding through private sources (fundraising). It is important not only with respect to the instability of grant funding, but also our ambition to realize our own projects and the need to secure our own financial contribution for many projects [a requirement in some grant calls]. Commercial activity is important for securing the organization's stability, both the employment and administration, but it is important to make sure that it is not the only pillar of the statutory activities of the Foundation. (Annual Report 2014, Shipyard)

Diversification of funding is the easiest way to prevent funders from taking control of a think tank and to secure some financial stability over time (being less vulnerable if one of the sources disappears), but it also comes at a cost. As shown in Fig. 2.2, lacking developed philanthropy, most Polish think tanks resort to short-term project funding and collect a number of such grants in their budget portfolios. Most of these short-term projects are obtained through national and local government grants announced in public calls, but some also come from international project calls, for example, from the EU. Think tanks view these grants as somewhat problematic from the point of view of independence. First of all, these are “analyses on demand” (Annual Report 2017, Civil Development Forum); that is, the think tank must deliver analyses currently needed by the unit issuing the call, which might not align with what the think tank would itself prioritize. Grants also reduce an organization’s long-term planning opportunities.

This phenomenon is not unique to think tanks; in fact, it is shared by other civil society organizations and has been described as “grant fever” or “grantosis” (e.g., Jezierska, 2018; Socha, 2011; Załęski, 2012). The interviewees tended to argue that they were not suffering from grantosis, but some pointed to others or gave historic examples. One of them, the CEO of the Batory Foundation, told of his visit in the early 1990s to Moscow, where he encountered many organizations engaging in very similar programs, all centered on two themes: ecology and decentralization. He came to realize that this focus was simply due to the availability of foreign funding in those issue areas.

They adjusted. This is a case of what I call imperialism, at least cognitive—i.e., they defined these as the most important problems. There is no reason why funders would know what should really be a [local] priority. (Interview, Batory Foundation)

One interviewee admitted that “because there is no structural funding to get hold of, we are forced to conduct projects.” Because these projects mostly come from national and local government calls, he added, “necessarily, we become dependent on the public sector” (Interview, Institute of Public Affairs). The goals and standards are set by the public

administration, and think tanks must “hunt” for projects, sometimes disregarding their organizations’ long-term objectives.

As revealed by the analysis, there is an expectation from resource dependence theory that the best way to curb dependence on any given funder is to diversify the sources of funding, but this has not been fully corroborated in the cases of the organizations studied. While diversification is regarded as a desirable solution in some cases, other organizations seem to follow a different logic. In order to remain true to their images as independent experts and maintain their distinct ideological profiles, they may opt out of the attempt to maximize diversification by avoiding some types of funding. Hence, the avoidance strategy may, at times, trump the diversification strategy proposed by resource dependence theory.

Conclusions

This chapter focuses on economic resources in Polish think tanks. In so doing, it offers a significant contribution to the think tank literature, which habitually omits non-anglophone contexts. The United States, which is usually the empirical base for think tank studies, has a strong tradition of philanthropy, rendering it rather different from Poland, where philanthropic funding sources are largely unavailable. While think tanks in most areas of the world must maneuver around the funding dilemma, trying to maintain an image of independence despite the need to secure quite significant levels of funding, their strategies take different forms according to context. As we have seen, there is also variation between institutions in one given polity.

Think tanks in former state-socialist countries played a crucial role in the transformation process after 1989. They almost uniformly assisted their governments in the (neo-)liberal direction of reforms. During that time, they were backed (financially and organizationally) by foreign donors, both private and public. After the 1990s, as a recent special issue on think tanks in Central and Eastern Europe makes clear (Bigday, 2021; Jezierska, 2021; Jezierska & Giusti 2021; Keudel & Carbou, 2021; Klásková & Císař, 2021), think tanks became a given in the civil society landscape in Poland and throughout the region. While the scope of this

chapter does not extend to the changed role of think tanks after the so-called illiberal turn in 2015, there has been a remarkable increase in terms of both the number of think tanks and their activity since the right-wing Law and Justice Party came to power.

In the context of the present volume, this chapter provides insights regarding a specific type of civil society organization in Poland. Think tanks consider themselves elite members of civil society (Jezierska, 2020); with respect to both budget and the type of activities they perform (service functions for smaller organizations), they indeed occupy an elevated position. They are also detached from civil society in the sense that they do not claim to represent the larger community or any specific group thereof. Think tanks serve ideas, not members or followers. At the same time, they provide a compact example of processes pertinent to Poland's broader civil society. Professionalization, marketization, grantosis—these can be found in other civil society organizations as well. Arguably, such processes are especially visible in think tanks, which by definition are highly specialized and more in need of relatively substantial funding. Furthermore, like other civil society organizations with limited resources, think tanks exhibit resourcefulness rather than passively adapting to their circumstances. Due to a lack of systematic access routes, they are compelled to find a variety of ways to circulate their analyses and reach policymakers. Think tanks exhibit resourcefulness in their securing of funding as well; they engage in different projects and juggle various activities daily. How far they can take these endeavors and still retain their think tank identity is another question (see Jezierska, 2020, 2021).

Both budget sizes and sources of funding in Polish think tanks have been discussed in this chapter. Corroborating observations from previous scholarship, the study found that funding of think tanks in Poland is largely dependent on local opportunity structure. As philanthropy in Poland is relatively undeveloped, its institutions cannot rely on substantial support from wealthy donors as can their counterparts operating in the U.S. Moreover, Struyk's (1999) comment that Central European think tanks are largely dependent on foreign funding no longer holds, at least in the case of Poland. Formerly central, foreign funding has yielded

to national and local governments as the main sources of economic resources for think tanks, following the trend for other civil society organizations in the country. This aligns with the discussion in the introduction to this volume, which stresses the potential perils of the state as the “center of gravity” (Meyer et al., 2019) largely defining the landscape of civil society.

This chapter has also elaborated on the funding dilemma, which involves think tanks’ need for relatively large budgets to be successful and their simultaneous need to present themselves as detached from funders in order to maintain appearances as independent experts. As the analysis indicates, there is no easy way out of this dilemma. Think tankers appear to share the conviction that money comes with strings attached. Two main strategies were identified among the studied institutions, both employed in an attempt to resolve the funding dilemma. The first strategy, very much in line with propositions from resource dependence theory, entails diversification of funding sources. This seems to be the preferred strategy of Polish think tanks, which hope to thus decrease dependence on individual funders. However, we might argue that diversification merely increases the complexity of dependencies and, at least in some cases, forces think tanks to engage in a pathological game of fundraising otherwise known as grantosis. The second strategy is to avoid certain types of funding outright; the concrete sources that an individual think tank eschews turn out to be linked to its ideological profile. Conservative institutions highlighted foreign funding as most problematic, while market liberal and centrist liberal institutions shunned state funding. Indeed, avoiding funding from a given source identified as undesirable for a given think tank might decrease the appearance of dependence on the most compromising funds and help uphold the organization’s identity and credibility (as a promoter of nationalist–conservative values or market liberal ones). At the same time, this avoidance only diminishes think tanks’ chances of obtaining much-needed funding. Especially in the case of liberal think tanks that deliberately avoid state funding, such a tactic precludes availing themselves of the most generous source of economic resources available in Poland.

Notes

1. This work was financed by the Swedish National Research Council, Grant 2014-1557.
2. According to a recent report (Klon/Jawor, 2019), only 6% of all Polish civil society organizations operated with budgets larger than 230,000 EUR (one million PLN) in 2018.

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3

Domestic Funding for Civil Society in a Non-Democratic Context: The Example of the Presidential Grants in Russia

Yulia Skokova and Christian Fröhlich

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, growing scholarly attention has been paid to the consolidation and global spread of authoritarian and hybrid forms of state and public governance (Levitsky & Way, 2010). This, in turn, has caused increasing interest in civil society development in such regimes (e.g. Aarts & Cavatorta, 2013; Cavatorta, 2013; Giersdorf & Croissant, 2011; Lewis, 2013; Lorch & Bunk, 2017). These earlier studies argue that, in non-democratic regimes, civil society can play a positive role in

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bringing about social and political change by challenging authoritarian governments (e.g. Alagappa, 2004; Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2017; Beumers et al., 2018). However, skepticism toward a civil society–democratization nexus is growing. Recent studies question the existence of a positive relationship between civil society and democratization and illuminate various ways in which civil society organizations contribute to regime legitimacy and stability (e.g. Froissart, 2014; Giersdorf & Croissant, 2011; Kawakibi, 2013; Lewis, 2013; Lorch & Bunk, 2017; Mazepus et al., 2016; Wischermann et al., 2018). Other authors have criticized “black-and-white” approaches to state–civil society relations in non-democratic regimes and have called for studying these processes as a reality of civic life (e.g. Cavatorta, 2013, p. 6). Under such regimes, with their varieties of complex state–civil society interrelations, governmental actors use institutional and regulative means in dynamic ways in their relationships with civic actors, at times coercing, at times enabling them (Huang, 2018).

Various countries with non-democratic governments shape the field of civil society by privileging organizations that provide social services while marginalizing human rights defenders and politically oriented actors (Giersdorf & Croissant, 2011; Skokova et al., 2018). Regulating access to material resources such as state funding for civil society organizations has thus become a crucial instrument for privileging and limiting certain actors of civil society. Moreover, adoption of public discourses or attachment of symbolic labels may serve to enable or restrict sources of organizational activity. However, the state itself also benefits from providing material resources to civil society organizations in that it gains symbolic success that strengthens its legitimacy. Studies show that non-democratic states do not repress civil society fully but rather partially support it, encouraging in particular those organizations concerned with the social needs of the population. Offering procurements and grants for civil society organizations also creates opportunities for states to take credit for their successful activities in this area (Lorch & Bunk, 2017). Furthermore, because non-democratic states lack developed representational structures, they often have difficulties detecting social problems and actors that threaten their status quo. In this sense, the public activities of civil society organizations can help authoritarian regimes monitor social processes

and identify social needs (Lorch & Bunk, 2017; Lorentzen, 2013). Moreover, state support enables those organizations to embody, encompass, and disseminate values that align with the regime's own legitimization discourse (Lewis, 2013). As Lewis (2013) stated, "authoritarian states expend considerable resources to maintain a hegemonic discourse that both legitimizes the existing regime and also renders political alternatives politically and discursively impossible" (p. 333); civil society organizations can become bearers of an official discourse which they help to implement in the public sphere through their activities (Lewis, 2013, p. 335). In a study of Algeria, Mozambique, and Vietnam, for instance, Wischermann et al. (2018) found that many associations support state-propagated patriarchal gender norms.

However, in terms of studying state–civil society relations under authoritarian regime conditions, the studies have focused on only one or the other: either on organizations' welfare function or on how they support the regime's legitimacy. In this chapter, we argue that governmental support for civil society in non-democratic regimes not only bolsters its welfare function but also attempts to intertwine non-governmental welfare provision with elements of a state-led legitimization discourse. Thus, we interpret state funding as a double-edged tool utilizing civil society actors to strengthen regime stability. The state strengthens its symbolic capital in society by investing material resources in civil society activities in crucial policy areas. We focus on the question of what kind of civil society an authoritarian state wants by considering the financial aid that the state devotes to the support of civic activities. In order to do so, we study the case of Russia, where the state makes a significant effort to shape the civil society sector.

While the phenomenon of governments influencing civil society through such measures as co-opting, preferential treatment, and containment is known across regime types (e.g. Grubb & Henriksen, 2019; see also Bederson & Semenov, Chap. 7 in this volume), Russia is a profound example of non-democratic governments' employment of these measures to secure legitimacy. We agree with previous studies that argue that the Russian state employs a dual approach toward civil society (Robertson, 2011; Salamon et al., 2015; Skokova et al., 2018), dividing the field of non-governmental actors into those loyal to and those oppositional to its

status quo and using various means to either support or restrict civil society organizations and individual actors. While limiting measures and their effects on Russian civil society have been well analyzed (Crotty et al., 2014; Flikke, 2018), the issue of how state support for civil society actors actually shapes the sector and how this support contributes to regime legitimacy remains understudied. Whereas co-optation of civil society organizations' successes in welfare provision is certainly a measure of securing regime legitimacy employed by many authoritarian states, the attempt to infect non-state social welfare with elements of a state-led legitimization discourse renders this process unique to the political and cultural context of a specific country. We show that, in Russia, conservative narratives about patriotism, nationalism, and militarism, among others, shape this public discourse and have become attached to public welfare.

In order to study the practice of state support for civil society organizations in Russia, we analyze the Presidential Grants Competition (PGC). This Russia-wide competition has been the largest funding institution for Russian civil society organizations since 2006. In 2016, more than 1500 organizations received grants totaling 4.148 billion rubles (\$63.8 million USD, here and throughout 1 USD = 65 RUB). An annual average of 15,000 civil society organizations submit applications, which is about 7% of the total number of those operating in Russia today. However, there was until recently little accessible data on the characteristics of the civil society organizations that apply and win, on the fields of activities in which they work, and on whether their applications to the PGC appeal to values and discourses supported by the state. A web portal created in 2013 makes it possible to download and analyze the data on all submitted applications to PGC between 2013 and 2016. This unique dataset allows us to reveal the state's preferred fields of activities and to trace the imprints of a state-led official discourse about the essence of Russian society. As a result, the analysis of submitted and winning applications reveals what part of civil society the Russian state embraces as contributing to regime stability.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, a literature review discusses developments in Russian state policy toward civil society organizations since the 1990s. After initial neglect, the state began to actively build

an institutional and legal framework for interaction with civil society. In doing so, it established a dual approach to civil society that prefers engagement with social problems and represses advocacy for political and human rights issues. This is supported by a state-led traditionalist–conservative discourse about Russian society. Second, the process of data extraction and the methodology behind the analysis are described. The third section provides the results of our analysis of the PGC data, showing that applications in the social sphere are strongly privileged and that reference to the traditionalist–conservative discourse raises a civil society organization’s chances of winning. Finally, we discuss the contribution that our results make to the field of current and future state–civil society relations in Russia.

State–Civil Society Relations and Legitimation Discourse in Russia

State–civil society relations in Russia are very dynamic. After the Soviet Union collapsed, the meaning of the term “civil society” (*grazhdanskoe obshchestvo*) was rarely addressed at the official state level; it was mainly used by social scientists, who understood it from a liberal perspective as “a kind of society [...] based on citizens actively recognizing their civil rights and responsibilities towards the state, and each other [...]” (Belokurova, 2010, p. 460). Consequently, civil society was assessed as weak or even absent in Russia (Evans et al., 2006). Indeed, during the 1990s, the Russian civil society sector was in its infancy, with a small number of active organizations and low levels of civic participation (Jakobson & Sanovich, 2010). Moreover, civil society organizations were not an object of state political interest at that time, and they subsisted primarily on funds from foreign donors who promoted their own preferred organizational models and missions (Belokurova, 2010; Evans et al., 2006; Jakobson & Sanovich, 2010; Sundstrom, 2006).

With economic growth and the rise of political centralization during most of the 2000s (Gel’man, 2015), the state reviewed its relationship to civil society issues, partially as a reaction to the color revolutions in

Eastern Europe and the Middle East (Crotty et al., 2014; Robertson, 2009). Since the 2000s, the state has gradually begun to put more effort into controlling the civil society sector (Gilbert, 2016; Jakobson & Sanovich, 2010; Salamon et al., 2015; Skokova et al., 2018). The starting point and the official turn of the state's policy toward civil society was the meeting of President Vladimir Putin and other government officials with more than 5000 civil society representatives at the so-called Civil Forum in 2001. Opening the Forum, Putin emphasized the need for partnership between the state and civil society and noted the importance of civil society organizations in solving various social problems as well as their contribution to the development of human capital. In the years to come, this vision of civil society organizations as actors performing socially significant functions would shape the general course of state policy.

By the mid-2000s, the first institutional fruits of the new state policy toward civil society appeared. The establishment of the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights in 2004 and of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation one year later opened up a trend of creating different sorts of consultative entities that have “become a fad” all over Russia (Stuvøy, 2014, p. 409). Some scholars argue that consultative entities could provide civil society organizations with an opportunity for visibility and advocacy (Cook & Vinogradova, 2006; Stuvøy, 2014), but in most cases, such entities appear unable to influence the decision-making process (Evans, 2008; Fröhlich, 2012; Ljubownikow & Crotty, 2016; Richter, 2009a, 2009b). Often, consultations work for “particular, one-off cases, but do not allow any general challenge to the operation of the institutions” (Daucé, 2014, p. 245). Moreover, the councils and chambers prefer socially oriented organizations, which function as transmission belts between themselves and society, to human rights-focused and other contentious types of organizations that question their status quo (Evans, 2008; Stuvøy, 2014). With consultative bodies, the state wants simultaneously to control civil society organizations by including them in institutional structures and to use them for regime legitimation by claiming the successes of their social welfare provision for itself (Richter, 2009a). At the same time, this formal and often superficial institutional inclusion provides state actors with the opportunity to obtain feedback regarding social problems arising in the population

(Evans, 2008; Sakwa, 2010) as well as the means to solve them by co-opting the expertise of experienced civic activists (Richter, 2009a, 2009b).

In the next phase, these institutional arrangements were complemented by legal and financial measures aimed at substituting foreign funding for Russian civil society organizations. In part, this has entailed state imposition of various legal restrictions on funding provided by foreign donors. The first step toward these restrictions was made in 2006 with the implementation of amendments to the federal law “On Nongovernmental Organizations” that introduced new regulations for registration, activities, and reporting of “a branch or representative office of a foreign non-profit organization” (Crotty et al., 2014; Gilbert, 2016; Maxwell, 2006). As Crotty et al. argued, the law caused a “reduction in CSO activity and curtailment of civil society development” (2014, p. 1253). Some years later, in 2012, as a reaction to a 2011–2012 wave of anti-governmental protests, the Russian government adopted a new and restrictive law on “foreign agents” (Flikke, 2018; see also Chaps. 1 and 7 in this volume for more detail) that poses a threat to the survival of human rights organizations (Daucé, 2014; Moser & Skripchenko, 2018), environmental organizations (Matejova et al., 2018), and think tanks (Romanov & Iarskaia-Smirnova, 2015). These organizations usually have little or no access to domestic funding and depend heavily on foreign support because they carry out what is legally considered to be political activity.

Because the law is vaguely formulated and its application is inconsistent, a broad range of public activities, such as the conducting of mass opinion polls or the expression of views about state politics, can move any civil society organization with any amount of foreign funding into the searchlight of the Ministry of Justice, which may then require it to register as a “foreign agent” and display that label on all public materials. This status not only obliges registered “foreign agents” to regularly provide expensive reports but also, more importantly, undermines public trust in civil society organizations in general and complicates their cooperations with other civil society organizations, businesses, and authorities (Flikke, 2018; Skokova et al., 2018; Tysiachniouk et al., 2018). As a result, it weakens the legitimacy of civil society organizations and undermines their development (Moser & Skripchenko, 2018).

Meanwhile, the state has deliberately begun to accumulate various tools to support preferred organizational forms and activities within civil society. With the adoption of Federal Law No. 40-FZ “On Introducing Amendments to Selected Legal Acts of the Russian Federation on Support for Socially Oriented Nonprofit Organizations” in 2010, the state significantly increased financial support to civil society organizations that address social problems and function in that regard as partners of public institutions (Benevolenski & Toepler, 2017; Krasnopol'skaya et al., 2015; Skokova et al., 2018). In addition to supplying financial support, the state has established incentives to support organizations working in the social sphere by providing them greater access to the welfare market. This is done mainly by stimulating the state agencies at the regional and local levels to contract civil society organizations to provide social services. For instance, in 2016, nonprofits obtained the legal status of “social service providers,” which gave them the opportunity to cover their operational costs from budgetary sources. In turn, all regions must report on the percentage of social services they procure from nonprofits.

The largest state financial support program for civil society, known as the Presidential Grants Competition (PGC), was established in 2006. Initially, the competition was administered by the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation. However, in 2007, the Presidential Administration reassigned the organization of the competition, application review, and grant distribution to several non-governmental grant operators—an administrative service for which they kept 6% of the funds for themselves. PGC grant operators are usually well-known civil society organizations that have been working in their thematic field for many years (see Table 3.1). Due to their intertwinement with state institutions, almost all of them fall into the category of government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGOs), with the exception of *Grazhdanskoe dostoinstvo*, which distributed grants in the category of human rights. *Obshchesto “Znanie,”* the Union of Women, the Russian Union of Youth, and almost all other organizations that act as grant operators either date back to Soviet times or were established by the current Russian authorities. For instance, *Obshchesto “Znanie”* is the successor of an identically named Soviet “civic” organization which was re-established by special presidential decree in 2015. Allotting grant operation to GONGOs allows the

Table 3.1 PGC awards by grant operators and their thematic areas, 2006–2016 (in millions of RUB)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Social research, including:										
<i>Historical heritage, Russian language and literature</i>	60	100	100	80	60	60	110	275	422	Russian Union of Rectors 650
Education, culture, and art, including:										
<i>Cultural and historical heritage, traditional values</i>	270	320	160	160	160	170	345	650	695	
<i>Humanitarian projects in CIS, Russian language and literature</i>										
Human rights										
<i>V podderzhku grazhdanskogo obshchestva</i>	135	200	170	160	160	170	200	500	528	500
Health										
<i>Liga Zdorov'ya Natsii</i>	150	230			100	100	570	824	519	450
Social services, including:										
<i>WWI heritage, support of veterans</i>	400	400	500	320	240	260	525	674	585	640
<i>Interfaith tolerance, public diplomacy</i>										
<i>Humanitarian projects in CIS countries</i>										
Youth										
<i>Gosudarstvennyy Klub Fund</i>	230	250	270	280	280	240	320	340	695	600
Public diplomacy, interethnic relations, traditional values										
<i>Elderly people and people in difficult living conditions, including:</i>										
<i>Traditional values</i>							500	235		
Family support, family values, including:										
<i>Cultural heritage</i>										
Infrastructural support of social projects										
Rural and community development										
Total funding (in million RUB)	1,245	1,500	1,200	1,000	1,000	1,000	2,570	3,698	4,228	4,727
Number of winners	1,224	1,120	736	451	602	585	1,237	1,278	1,392	1,579

state to maintain a high level of control over the process within PGC, on the one hand, and, on the other, to eliminate all potential risks in case of politically sensitive decisions. Although contentious human rights organizations won a few grants annually between 2013 and 2016, there are some policy areas in which civil society projects are not even symbolically supported. For instance, applications from independent nonprofits working in the field of election monitoring received minimal support (\$8400) from the PGC only once, in 2014, while in the years before and after none of their project proposals were supported.

As shown in Table 3.1, the PGC system was quite stable until 2013. There were six main broad thematic areas and eight grant operators that annually allocated quite small funds of about \$7600 per project. However, after the adoption of the “foreign agents” law in 2012, the PGC acquired new political and societal meaning. In order to substitute foreign funding and gain more control over the civil society sector, the state significantly increased the total amount of funding, which was distributed two or three times annually by an updated list of grant operators for an expanded range of thematic areas. The total amount of funding reached \$39.5 million in 2013 and \$69.2 million in 2016. More than 12,000 unique civil society organizations applied and more than 5000 won PGC grants between 2013 and 2016. As for the thematic areas, Table 3.1 clearly demonstrates their proliferation since 2013. From year to year, grant operators have covered increasing numbers of complicated and politically important issues going beyond the provision of social services to people in need. For instance, in 2015, the PGC began to approve and fund applications related to the topic of “soft power,” those that realize “humanitarian projects in CIS countries,” and those that “popularize Russian language and literature.” Likewise, the issue of preserving and spreading traditional and family values has received increasing attention and funding from the PGC.

This shift toward issues related to “Russianness” and geopolitical concerns within the PGC corresponds with the rise of a public discourse fostered by state actors that set boundaries between the Russian people and other nations, chiefly those in the West, by circulating and reinforcing a particular political ideology through state-owned or state-loyal print and TV media (Babayan, 2017). This state-led discourse promotes an

image of Russia as a “distinct civilization” that entails certain “spiritual values” and makes it superior to other cultures (Tsygankov, 2016). The literature on this Russian civilizational discourse has identified five main elements. While the emphasis on *traditional values* (1) allows for a separation from Western civilization, which is perceived as hostile (Østbø, 2017), it also supports a *nationalism* (2) that includes both international confrontations and domestic crackdowns on oppositional actors (Shevtsova, 2015). In addition, sacralization of the heroic victory in the Great Patriotic War (World War II, *sic*) leads to *militarism* (3) and *patriotism* (4) (Laruelle, 2015; Wood, 2011). This cultural, value-based exceptionalism aligns well with *orthodoxy* (5) as a crucial element of national identity (Jarzyńska, 2014).

This general discourse on the essence of Russian society relates to all of its subsystems and to civil society in particular. For the Russian government, civil society should be part of a non-partisan and apolitical partnership with the authorities to solve social problems, but it should not embrace values of human rights or undermine the state’s status quo (Belokurova, 2010). Thus, civil society organizations must adopt the traditionalist–conservative ideological consensus that Russia’s unique cultural, political, and historical features should define the country’s path; those that oppose this position meet with hostile attitudes and little support (Chebankova, 2015). The following empirical section analyzes the PGC with regard to this ideological stance in Russian state–civil society relations. We argue that traditionalist–conservative elements of state discourse are introduced into civil society by means of governmental funding, thus ideologizing and to some extent politicizing public welfare provision.

Data and Methods

In order to determine which spheres of civic activities are most supported by the governmental PGC and whether these are intertwined with a conservative public discourse disseminated by the state, we downloaded all grant applications ($N = 48,551$) for 2013–2016 using the *rvest* package, version 0.3.2 for R software version 3.4.1. All applications to the PGC

and the results of their review have been published on the official PGC website (<https://grants.oprf.ru>) with open access since 2013. When the dataset had been cleaned of duplications and applications with absent descriptions, the final dataset included 41,063 applications, of which 5381 won PGC grants. Each application contained the following information: the name of the project, a short project description, the name of the civil society organization applying, its place of official registration, and an organizational identifier. For successful applications, we also noted the amount of the grant in Russian rubles.

We coded applications to identify their fields of activities and the presence of discursive elements. First, we randomly selected 1700 applications and built a dictionary of specific search words on the basis of their content. Later, the dictionary was expanded using the target-word collocations technique available in the *quanteda* package, version 1.1.0 for R (Benoit et al., 2018). The dictionary covers all derived forms of all search words, including singular and plural forms as well as different grammatical forms, declensions, and endings.

To code the fields of activities of project applications, we applied the International Classification of Non-Profit Organizations (ICNPO) (Salamon & Anheier, 1996), which defines 11 specific fields varying from culture and recreation to social service provision, environmental protection, etc. (see Table 3.2). As discussed above, the state promotes a traditionalist–conservative ideology with regard to Russia in general and civil society in particular. In our empirical analysis, we therefore focused on identifying the occurrence of elements of that ideology over time in PGC project applications. The resulting dictionary included the five above-mentioned elements of the traditionalist–conservative discursive:

1. The element of *traditional values* is represented by words describing “traditional” [*traditsionnye*], “spiritual” [*dukhovnye*], and “moral” [*moral’nye/nravstvennye*] “values” [*tsennosti*], “attitudes” [*ustoi*], and “traditions” [*traditsii*], etc.;
2. *Nationalism* covers a wide spectrum of terms such as “national interest” [*natsional’nye interesy*] and “national security” [*natsional’naya bezopastnost’*], “Russian world” [*Russky mir*] and “Eurasian union”

Table 3.2 PGC winners by field of activities and presence of conservative narratives, 2013–2016 (%)

Field of activities	Presence of conservative narratives within each field of activities (applications/ winners)										Any of 5 CN
	Applications	Winners	Traditional values	Nationalism	Militarism	Patriotism	Orthodoxy	Orthodoxy	Orthodoxy	Orthodoxy	
Culture and recreation	20.4	17.7	4.4***/ 4.7	0.9/ 1.1	21.8***/ 25.4***	17.8***/ 20.9***	2.7***/ 3.6*	2.7***/ 3.6*	2.7***/ 3.6*	33.5***/ 39.6***	
Education and research	23.1	23.4	2.9***/ 3.2*	1.4***/ 2.7***	10.4***/ 13.9***	9.8***/ 14.4	2.3***/ 2.9***	2.3***/ 2.9***	2.3***/ 2.9***	19.2***/ 25.6***	
Health	6.5	6.4	1.2***/ 0.9***	0.3***/ 0.3*	10.8***/ 11.6***	2.4***/ 4.3***	2.7***/ 4.0	2.7***/ 4.0	2.7***/ 4.0	15.0***/ 17.3***	
Social services	40.3	39.0	4.2***/ 4.8*	0.7***/ 1.0***	17.6***/ 20.1***	12.8***/ 15.8***	3.3***/ 4.0**	3.3***/ 4.0**	3.3***/ 4.0**	27.3***/ 33.1***	
Environment	2.8	2.1	0.8**/ 1.7	0.1***/ 0.0	4.7***/ 3.5***	4.2***/ 3.5***	1.1***/ 0.9*	1.1***/ 0.9*	1.1***/ 0.9*	9.7***/ 7.8***	
Development and housing	3.5	3.6	0.8***/ 0.0***	0.2***/ 0.5	8.5***/ 8.8***	4.0***/ 5.7***	0.4***/ 0.5***	0.4***/ 0.5***	0.4***/ 0.5***	10.9***/ 11.9***	
Philanthropy	3.0	2.4	1.3***/ 1.5	0.6/ 0.8	15.2/ 17.7	10.3/ 19.2*	2.3**/ 3.1	2.3**/ 3.1	2.3**/ 3.1	22.4**/ 28.5	
Law and politics	7.3	10.9	1.2***/ 0.3***	2.5***/ 2.7*	17.3**/ 17.5	3.4***/ 2.9***	1.2***/ 1.4***	1.2***/ 1.4***	1.2***/ 1.4***	22.8*/ 23.5**	
International activity	2.2	2.9	5.7***/ 4.5	5.4***/ 8.3***	13.4*/ 12.2*	12.4/ 14.1	1.6***/ 1.9*	1.6***/ 1.9*	1.6***/ 1.9*	29.4**/ 32.7	
Religion	3.2	4.1	21.4***/ 21.1***	3.6***/ 2.8	15.3/ 14.7	17.4***/ 18.8*	45.7***/ 45.9***	45.7***/ 45.9***	45.7***/ 45.9***	69.8***/ 71.1***	

(continued)

Table 3.2 (continued)

Field of activities	Presence of conservative narratives within each field of activities (applications/ winners)									
	Applications	Winners	Traditional values	Nationalism	Militarism	Patriotism	Orthodoxy	Any of 5 CN		
Labor unions	0.3	0.4	0.0**/	0.0/	2.7***/	1.8***/	0.0**/	3.6***		
All fields of activities ^a	100	100	0.0	0.0	0.0*	0.0*	0.0	0.0***		
Total N	41,063	5381	3.7	1.1/	15.4/	11.2/	3.9/	25.7/		
			4.1	1.6	17.4	13.5	4.9	30.5		
			1537/	432/	6343/	4616/	1598/	10,543/		
			219	86	937	728	264	1642		

Note: Chi-square $***p < 0.001$, $**p < 0.01$, $*p < 0.05$

^aChi-square is unavailable for multiple responses

[*Evraziysky soyuz*], “fifth column” [*pyataya colonna*], “color revolution” [*tsvetnaya revolyutsiya*], etc.;

3. The *militarism* narrative is identified by the words “military” [*voennij*], “war” [*voyna*], “army” [*armiya*], “soldier” [*soldat*], “veteran” [*vet-eran*], etc.;
4. *Patriotism* is indicated by the word “patriot” [*patriot*] and all derived forms of it;
5. *Orthodoxy* is defined by the words and phrases “church” [*tserkov*], “orthodox” [*pravoslunny*], “metropolitan” [*mitropolit*], “Old Believers” [*staroobryadtsy*], “Orthodox procession” [*krestny hod*], etc.

Finally, words corresponding to the 11 fields of activities and the 5 conservative narratives were collected, counted, and saved in 16 new corresponding variables. Because a single application might refer to several categories of activities (on average, applications referred to 3.16), we recoded these variables and related an application to the field of activities for which it contained the most dictionary words. An application was assigned to several categories only if the numbers of dictionary words for more than one category were equivalent.

Results

As the largest domestic source of funding for civil society organizations in Russia, the PGC has considerable impact on the institutional and value structure of the country’s entire civil society sector. Decisions on the allocation of grants are not apolitical; they are based on the state’s vision for the civil society and on the activities expected of civil society organizations. By examining the data on (1) which organizations are applying and winning, (2) the content of their applications in terms of fields of activities, and (3) the presence of conservative narratives within the applications, we can better understand what kind of civil society the Russian state wants.

The PGC data analysis shows that, altogether, more than 12,000 unique organizations applied and about 5,000 were awarded grants in the 2013–2016 competitions. The number of applications constituted

about 5% of all officially registered organizations. However, because some experts argue that only about one-third of registered civil society organizations are actually functioning (Mersianova & Jakobson, 2007), the actual percentage is presumably much higher and is likely as high as 20%. The largest percentages of applying organizations were based in Moscow (31%) and St. Petersburg (6%). Among other areas, organizations from Tatarstan, Ekaterinburg, Bashkortostan, Perm, Nizhny Novgorod, Samara, and Novosibirsk applied for and won PGC grants more than others. Most of the organizations were already quite well established; the mean organizational age of both applying and winning organizations was eight years, but 40% had been registered for more than ten years before they submitted an application to the PGC. Moreover, three quarters (76%) of the organizations that applied in 2016 had applied at least once since 2013, and almost half of all grants (47% of those awarded) were allocated to organizations that had won at least once in a previous year.

Most applying civil society organizations submitted one application per year, although some organizations managed to apply for several different projects simultaneously. For example, the Labor Union of Student Youth applied with 75 projects in 2016, but none of them was supported. Overall, about 10% of organizations proposed more than three projects per year. In terms of funding, the mean amount of a presidential grant was \$38,500 per project. However, there was a huge difference between the smallest (\$370) and the greatest (\$307,700) amount of funding allocated to organizations during the selected period of 2013–2016, and the differences were similar in each year. The proportion of small grants (up to one million RUB or \$15,400) decreased from 37% in 2013 to 22% in 2016, and, conversely, larger PGC grants (more than three million RUB or \$46,200) became more common (15% and 28% in 2013 and 2016, respectively).

Concerning the content of applications, according to the results presented in Table 3.2, both applicants and winners addressing issues and concerns related to the social sphere were in an absolute majority during the period of study. Among all winners, 39% were from the social services field and 23.4% addressed education and research (mainly education); the third best-represented field was culture and recreation (17.7%).

Together, these three categories accounted for 77.8% of all applications and for 74% of winners. In monetary terms, they received 72.7% of all PGC funding from 2013 to 2016. The enormous bias toward the social sphere demonstrates the state's priority to integrate civil society into public welfare provision. It is politically safe to support civil society organizations in the social sector as they usually do not interfere in sensitive issues such as human rights and environmental protection (Giersdorf & Croissant, 2011). Supporting civil society organizations in the social sphere allows the state to secure legitimacy by co-opting the attainments of non-governmental service provision and solving social problems (Lorch & Bunk, 2017).

The remainder of applications, related to such fields as law and politics (10.9%), health (6.4%), and the environment (2.1%), together represent 29% of all winners and 30% of total PGC funding. Of all fields of activities, projects related to labor unions (0.4%) received the smallest share of PGC grants, with only 21 applications from 14 organizations winning support from 2013 to 2016. The marginal presence of these fields primarily reflects the weakness of Russian civil society in those particular areas. However, as shown in Table 3.2, the state supported them in almost the same proportion as they applied, and each year the list of winners included at least one famous, contentious civil society organization working in the field of human rights or environmental protection. For instance, the Moscow Helsinki Group won several PGC grants annually; 10 of their 15 applications were supported between 2013 and 2016.

Regarding the elements of the state's conservative discourse in application texts, our research results show that these were present in approximately every fourth project description submitted (27.5%). Among grant recipients, the use of conservative discourses was slightly more common: one-third (30.5%) of winning applications related to at least one of the five narratives. The percentage of applications containing elements of traditionalist-conservative discourses grew from 22.9% in 2013 to 26.8% in 2016. The same amount of growth appeared among the winners, with the percentage increasing from 25.9% to 31.9% during the same period (for both comparisons, chi-square $p < 0.01$).

In many cases, references to traditionalist-conservative discourses appeared in relation to a goal of the proposed projects—"preserve

traditional values,” “develop a sense of patriotism,” or “sustain the memory of the Great Patriotic War.” The most commonly present discursive elements were militarism and patriotism, which appeared separately in 17.4% and 13.5%, respectively, of all winning project submissions. The correlation between these two is statistically significant ($R = 0.364$, $p < 0.01$), as their merger in the phrase “military–patriotic” (related to “education of youth” or “summer camps”) has become a cliché in the Russian language (Omelchenko et al., 2015). One grant recipient employed conservative narratives in the application as follows:

The project suggests formation of military–patriotic [military, patriotic] and spiritual–moral [traditional values] education of young people for military service [military], giving the feeling of patriotism [patriotism] a new sound and continuing the traditions [traditional values] of the past.

The use of conservative narratives penetrated applications from most fields of activities, and statistically significant associations between those narratives and fields of activities demonstrate the impact that the state’s official “civilization discourse” has had on Russian civil society organizations’ descriptions of their proposed project work. Apart from the more obvious field of religion, in which 45.9% of winning applications operated with conservative narratives, they were also present in one-fourth to one-third of applications in the fields of culture and recreation (39.6%), social services (33.1%), international activity (32.7%), philanthropy (28.5%), and education and research (25.6%). These applications relied predominantly on narratives related to patriotism and militarism. For instance, many culture and recreation applications used these two narratives in proposals for projects to involve young people in preserving the cultural heritage of the Great Patriotic War and thus nurture a sense of patriotism among the younger generation:

The project is aimed at the patriotic [patriotism] education of youth by conducting archaeological explorations at battle sites [militarism] of the Soviet–Finnish War [militarism] of 1939–1940 and development of skills in military–archaeological [militarism] affairs.

Many civil society organizations describing their operational work in social service provision, education, and healthcare also chose to insert references to conservative narratives into their grant applications. The following example shows the intertwining of social rehabilitation issues with conservative narratives:

The project is aimed at social rehabilitation and prevention of drug addiction and alcoholism among young people through a series of educational events. The ideological basis is the traditional spiritual values [traditional values] of the Russian people, as well as the rituals and traditions [traditional values] associated with the parental home, family, mercy, mutual aid, and a healthy lifestyle.

In sum, the results show that financial support provided to civil society organizations by the PGC is significantly biased toward specific fields of activities. With minor exceptions, about three quarters of winning PGC projects from 2013 to 2016 were related to the social sphere, while those involved with the environment and with labor unions were an absolute minority. These results indicate that state financial support to civil society serves as an instrument to shape it by privileging organizations that help to fill the gaps within the welfare system. Moreover, the results show that approximately one-fourth of all submitted applications as well as one-third of all winning applications relate to traditionalist–conservative elements of public discourse. In our opinion, this indicates a twofold process: first, the considerable proportion of submissions relating to conservative discourses provides evidence that these are perceived as a symbolic resource used in order to raise organizations' chances of acquiring grants. Second, the state is taking advantage of the work of successful applicants in line with its ideological discourse while also reinforcing this trend by privileging carriers of traditionalist and conservative values. This result indicates that governmental support in the apolitical, uncontentious fields of social service provision, health, and education retains a political dimension in that it provides the primary platform for the diffusion of state-led conservative legitimization discourse.

Conclusion

Taking the example of Russia, this chapter sheds light on the nature of governmental support for civil society under authoritarian regime conditions. It has been stated before that Russian civil society organizations live in “dual realities” (Salamon et al., 2015) in that the state sets up a structure of supporting measures but at the same time limits the scope of organizations’ activities. The PGC shows these dualities in state–civil society relations, with the list of recipients featuring both patriotic, pro-Putin hardliners and long-established, critical human rights organizations. By analyzing the unique dataset of Presidential Grant applicants and winners between 2013 and 2016, we studied the scope of funded projects according to their topics and aims as well as the characteristics of the organizations behind them. In doing so, we were also led by the question of the extent to which submitted applications and PGC funding practices relate to a state-led legitimation discourse.

On one hand, the results of our study of the PGC demonstrate that the Russian state promotes the development of civil society with a nationwide and very well-funded support scheme, giving priority to organizations working on issues related to social services, education, health, and culture. Such a distribution of grants can be interpreted as a measure by the state to close welfare gaps and to engage in feedback processes regarding social needs in the population. In that regard, Russia fits into a general trend among non-democratic regimes to secure legitimacy by co-opting civil society successes in improving living conditions.

On the other hand, we illustrate that the PGC merges public welfare with a state-led conservative discourse regarding the essence of Russia and the Russian people. This civilizational discourse is most prevalent in submitted as well as in successful applications in welfare-related fields of activities. Although attempts to secure regime stability by establishing a legitimizing public discourse are common among authoritarian regimes, the core issues of the discourse are probably unique in every country. Furthermore, while welfare provision and discourse establishment may often be separate sets of strategic activities, the PGC in Russia is an example of a merging of both efforts in order to integrate civil society into a

system that safeguards the regime. It attempts to do so by shaping the scope of activities of civil society organizations through a well-funded incentive system, but also by using public funding to adjust civil society organizations' positions in public discourse. Thus, material and immaterial resources are strongly interconnected in state–civil society relations in contemporary Russia. Material resource accumulation by civil society organizations has become increasingly linked with a stated attachment to certain elements of state-led public discourse that yield crucial immaterial resources for organizational sustainability; this trade-off, however, enables the state to convert material resources into symbolic value by co-opting civil society's provision of welfare services, strengthening regime stability by inducing a traditionalist–conservative legitimization discourse in the sphere of civil society.

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4

Polish Human Rights Organizations: Resisting Institutional Pressures

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Introduction

The coming to power of the Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) party in 2015 represented a critical juncture for civil society organizations in Poland. One of the explicit ambitions of the new government has been to redesign the structure of Polish civil society. To this end, a new funding institution was created: the National Freedom Institute—Centre for Civil Society Development,

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the first executive agency in the history of Poland responsible for supporting civil society, public benefit activities, and volunteering [...] provid[ing] non-governmental organizations with content-related and financial support programmes. (National Freedom Institute, 2021)

While it is undeniable that this entailed a major increase in state funding for civil society organizations, this government agency has systematically redesigned the composition of Polish civil society, clearly prioritizing civil society organizations that align ideologically with the government (Szczygielska, 2019). In effect, civil society has undergone a significant reconfiguration (Toepler et al., 2020). According to the official government narrative, legislation and funding schemes prior to 2015 privileged liberal and left-oriented civil society organizations (Korolczuk, 2021); this imbalance would now be corrected by prioritizing civil society organizations with conservative views. There is sufficient evidence in the academic literature that the balancing act was accompanied by a wide range of institutional pressures through funding programs and regulations for reporting and accountability, as well as public smearing and legal harassment against liberal civil society organizations (e.g. Bill & Stanley, 2020; Marzec & Neubacher, 2020; Roggeband & Krizsán, 2021; Szuleka, 2018). This chapter focuses on how human rights organizations handle such institutional pressures, analyzing both the various resources at their disposal and the resourceful use of those resources.

The conceptual framework for the analysis is based on Christine Oliver's (1991) seminal work on organizational responses to institutional pressures. Oliver argues that organizations are not invariably passive, conforming to the expectations and demands generated by regulatory structures, government agencies, laws, donors, and other stakeholders. On the

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contrary, they are capable of demonstrating varying degrees of awareness, proactiveness, self-interest, and influence, depending on the origins and forms of institutional coercion as well as on the broader institutional and organizational environment. Following this volume's analytical approach (see Kravchenko et al., Chap. 1 in this volume), we suggest that a thorough examination of the resources used to exert pressure on organizations, and of the resources that organizations mobilize in response, may contribute to a better understanding of the strategic and tactical choices that organizations make. In this study, we systematically examine opportunities and limitations that have shaped the economic, symbolic, social, and human resources of human rights organizations in Poland since 2015, focusing on organizational characteristics and the environmental conditions that determine their action repertoire.

The data used in this chapter were drawn from two studies conducted by the Klon/Jawor Association. The first study, entitled "The capacity of human rights organizations," was carried out in late 2018 and early 2019 (Klon/Jawor, 2019b). It defined human rights organizations as associations and foundations that focus on issues of social justice and equality, protection of human rights and freedoms in general, and those of ethnic, gender, and sexual minorities in particular. According to the Directory of Civil Society Organizations (Portal organizacji pozarządowych, 2021), the number of human rights organizations in Poland is approximately 200. However, since no specific legal or organizational form is associated with these spheres of civic activities, the study's research design recognized organizations' self-identification as human rights organizations as an important element of the analytical definition. The data collection strategy was therefore based on reaching out to a significantly larger sample of 460 organizations in order to ensure the inclusion of organizations that may not have met formal criteria but that identified human rights advocacy in their activities. Data collection was carried out in two stages. First, an online survey was sent out to the organizations included in the sample, drawing a response rate of approximately 25% ($N = 109$). The low response rate resulted from the oversampling strategy (Davern, 2013; Johnson & Wislar, 2012) and was addressed at the second stage of data collection, which included in-depth interviews with representatives of ten organizations. The qualitative sample included organizations working

with a broad range of issues (social justice and equality, human rights, anti-discrimination education, and issues related to migrants and refugees, sexual minorities, and women) and geographical locations (provinces of Lower Silesia, Łódź, Lesser Poland, Mazovia, Podlasie, Podkarpacie, and Silesia).¹

The second study used in this chapter is a recurring survey called “The capacity of the nongovernmental sector,” based on a representative sample of all Polish associations and foundations ($N = 1300$). It has been conducted every two to three years since 2002 (Klon/Jawor, 2019a). In the analysis below, we combine the results of the two surveys described here in order to examine human rights organizations in the broader context of Polish civil society.

For the purposes of this chapter, we divide the resources used by human rights organizations into four broad categories: (1) *economic*, in the form of financial revenues at their disposal; (2) *symbolic*, expressed as meanings assigned to an organization’s mission and vision for the civil society as a whole; (3) *social*, referring to networks and connections with other actors in the field; and (4) *human* resources, consisting of various categories of staff that organizations can mobilize. Further developing Oliver’s (1991) conceptual framework, we suggest that the structure and scope of economic resources are largely shaped by the specific instruments that the current political regime is using to influence not only organizational efficiency but the conditions for organizations’ very survival. While the state’s monopoly on public finances and their discretionary distribution is difficult to challenge, human rights organizations develop instruments for maneuvering within limitations and finding alternative sources. Our analysis offers a detailed examination of the ways in which human rights organizations meet institutional demands to ensure their survival while striving to accomplish their missions.

Economic Resources

As our data demonstrate, human rights organizations are located mainly in Poland’s largest cities; approximately 60% operate in cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants, and few are found in rural areas; meanwhile,

25% of all civil society associations and foundations are based in rural areas. Human rights organizations also operate widely—almost half of them on a national scale and one in three on an international scale—whereas the share of organizations with such a wide range in the entire nongovernmental sector is smaller; only 31% operate nationwide and 9% abroad. Organizations' orientation toward national and international audiences is defined by their advocacy work, but they also receive significant financial support from these bases. Although the most common sources of funding are membership fees, local government funds, and private donations, the largest share of funding is provided through state-run programs, including the distribution of domestic and foreign money (Klon/Jawor, 2019a).

As Fig. 4.1 illustrates, human rights organizations have significantly higher revenues than the entire sector: in 2017, the budget of an average human rights organization was 123,000 PLN as compared to an average of 28,000 PLN for the sector as a whole. This discrepancy can be explained in part by greater diversification of sources of income; on average, human rights organizations have four different types of funding in their budget,

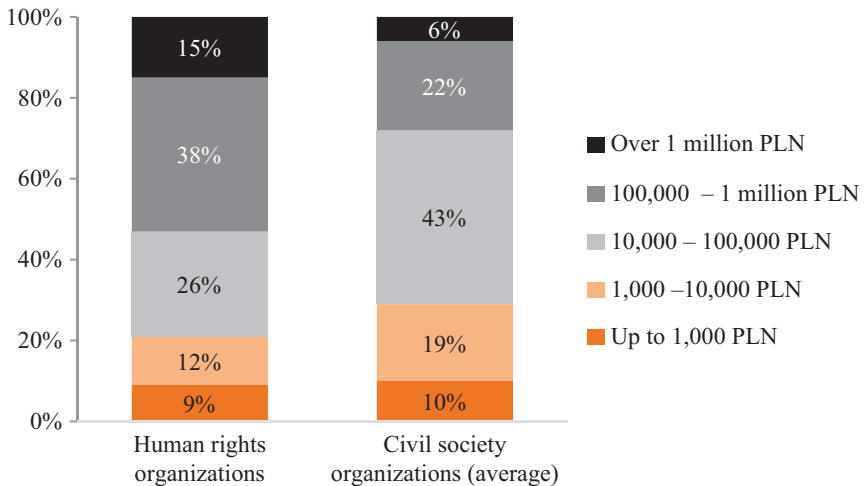


Fig. 4.1 Distribution of organizations by revenue size, 2017. (Source: Klon/Jawor (2019b, p. 4). Note: Human rights organizations $N = 100$, civil society organizations [average] $N = 1091$)

compared to three across the sector. However, this does not mean that no entities classified as human rights organizations operate with very limited funds—the percentage with the smallest incomes (up to 1000 PLN) was similar to that among all Polish civil society organizations. The revenue structure of human rights organizations is set apart by the significantly higher share of organizations with revenues above 100,000 PLN—53% among human rights organizations and 28% on average.

The financial viability of Polish human rights organizations has been largely affected by the overall process of centralization and increased state scrutiny. In 2017, the National Freedom Institute—Centre for Civil Society Development, a government agency established to distribute all public funds, followed guidelines that allowed for arbitrary decisions in the allocation of those funds. Although formal public consultations on the guidelines were held, the government failed to address any of the critical remarks submitted by civil society organizations; it also provided special support to organizations that supported its agenda. According to a report by USAID, 16% of the Civil Organization Development Program, managed by the National Freedom Institute, went to organizational units of the Catholic Church, while 12% went to organizations that not only support far-right ideology but even utilize violent tactics (USAID, 2019, p. 170).

In the face of diminished access to state funding, which for a significant period of time was one of the most substantial providers of economic resources, many human rights organizations are experiencing problems with maintaining financial continuity and thus with employing workers and collaborators, paying office rents, and even carrying out their statutory activities:

In terms of finances, we are in the same situation as the women who come to us. When I went to the meeting, I realized that I am working in jobs that are low-paid—childcare, child rearing, where it is clear that salaries will be the lowest, that nothing can be gained there. (R9)

According to the interviewees, this dire economic situation was exacerbated after 2015. Interviewees repeatedly brought up the impact of political changes, mentioning the cutting off of public funds that had

previously been available to human rights organizations (both at the local and government levels), the withholding of funding by some government agencies, and delays in appointing the operator for one of the largest international grant programs, the European Economic Area (EEA) and Norway Grants,² which is a condition for allocating the funding. These changes led to limitations on the realization of many statutory activities and projects by human rights organizations; it also affected their ongoing financial stability, as stated by one interviewee: “Financially, 2016 was the most difficult year in our history. For me, it was even a moment when we strongly doubted that we would survive” (R6).

In 2018, the majority of human rights organizations (about 70%) had guarantees for less than half of their budgets for activities until the end of that year. In this way, they resemble average Polish civil society organizations. However, in the case of human rights organizations, current financial instability is partly explained by the political situation, which forces some of them into what is known as “hibernation” as they wait out the period of this unfavorable political opportunity structure:

There are some organizations that have hibernated. There are some which used to have an office, a few employees and various creative programs and used to go out to people, and at the moment they have two experts, they don't have an office and they operate from home; on a call basis they are able to do something. The qualitative difference is gigantic. (R7)

Moreover, after 2015, a dilemma emerged for human rights organizations that acquired public funding, a dominant source of income for most. Not only is public funding in short supply; more importantly, it is tainted by the illiberal orientation of the Law and Justice government. Accepting such funding could be compromising for human rights organizations, damaging perceptions of their independence and autonomy (see Jeziarska, Chap. 2 in this volume). One interviewee decried the fact that, after winning a public procurement grant, their organization had clearly been ostracized by fellow human rights organizations. Applying for and accepting grants from public funds was seen as an expression of approval of the current regime, which was unacceptable to the more uncompromising group of human rights organizations.

In an environment that does not consider their work legitimate or beneficial to society, human rights organizations have no tools with which to defy funding regulations; instead, they diversify their economic resources as a means of addressing the various costs generated by the ideological bias of state funding channels.

The structure of revenue sources (Table 4.1) presents an important distinguishing characteristic. Although human rights organizations are often considered a part of the overall NGO-ization trend (Jacobsson & Saxonberg, 2013b), membership fees were reported as a source of revenues by 45% of organizations in the sample. Although this number is smaller than that among civil society organizations on average, it indicates that a significant share of human rights organizations relies on a grassroots membership base. It is also noteworthy that human rights organizations are significantly less likely than other civil society organizations to apply to local authorities (town hall/municipality) for a grant. In

Table 4.1 Sources of funding, 2017, % of organizations identified

	Human rights organizations	Civil society organizations (average)
Membership fees	45	63
Private donations	66	50
Corporate donations	37	35
1% of tax	25	25
Bank interest, profits from endowments, etc.	22	13
Economic activities	15	7
Income from assets	6	5
Paid statutory activity	19	18
Campaign income, public collections	17	10
Local government sources	36	61
Government and central administration sources	34	20
Support from national NGOs	33	12
Support from foreign NGOs	25	3
European Union funds	30	11
Foreign public sources outside the EU	16	1
Other sources	6	7
<i>N</i>	103	1290

Source: Klon/Jawor (2019b, p. 16)

2017, such support was applied for by 36% of human rights organizations and 60% of all civil society organizations.

As data also demonstrate, human rights organizations are more likely to take advantage of sources such as European Union funds, donations from private individuals, and foreign public sources from outside the EU (these include grants from embassies, such as that of the United States). However, there is great variation in the financial situations of human rights organizations. For instance, one interviewed representative reported that their human rights organization was maintained by a foreign parent foundation which financed its basic costs every year (employment of full-time staff, costs of office maintenance, and statutory activities). In contrast, most of the other organizations must utilize resourcefulness in securing foreign funding or the basis of short-term projects. Still, they attempt to compete for domestic and/or alternative resources, proactively building economic security:

We have liquidity. In our opinion, we managed to achieve considerable savings over the past 10 years, which secured us in the event of a project failure. If we lack funds from project activities, we can freely decide to use these savings to carry out statutory activities. Sometimes we use it, also from the 1%. Now we want to strengthen our statutory activity. (R8)

The abovementioned 1% tax revenue refers to the legally established procedure that allows Polish citizens, as part of their tax declarations, to directly support a public benefit civil society organization of their choice. This system was introduced in 2003 to stimulate civic engagement, raise awareness about civil society activities, and help Polish civil society organizations become less financially dependent on the state (Nałęcz et al., 2015). Earlier research has shown that organizations running socially oriented campaigns are more often recipients of this type of donation (Piechota, 2015). As shown in Table 4.1, human rights organizations also engage successfully with individual donors in this way, reporting donation levels similar to those of Poland's general population of civil society organizations.

One innovation mentioned as a possible way to avoid dependency on public funding is fundraising. However, fundraising remains more an

ambition than a reality among human rights organizations. Only a few of the studied organizations had developed a professional approach to fundraising:

We are working on something like a loyalty program. We were also thinking about doing some fundraising abroad—London, Paris or something like that. It is still an uncharted topic. (R5)

Most human rights organizations use a learning-by-doing approach to fundraising, a task that is often distributed among all members of the board or assigned to specific individuals in addition to other responsibilities. Representatives of the surveyed organizations admitted that neither they nor others involved in their organizations had the experience and competence necessary for success in fundraising:

Fundraising was generally here, but in a somewhat trivial form. We had what we had, but we did not work on it so much. I know that we are supposed to do it more intensively this year. (R4)

Still, in the broader sector, only 38% of civil society organizations declare that they undertake fundraising activities, while 54% of human rights organizations do so. Interestingly, when we compare the activities undertaken by human rights organizations and other third-sector entities in order to raise funds (from individuals, companies, or private foundations), the strategies adopted differ significantly. Human rights organizations are more innovative, more often attempting to raise funds by reaching out to potential donors via the Internet (via email, through their websites or social media profiles, or on crowdfunding platforms), while other organizations more often choose traditional offline tools and methods. Human rights organizations also stand out in their more frequent use of donations and public collections, as well as greater numbers of contributions from individuals (while there is no significant difference in the number of corporate donations). Undoubtedly, the effectiveness of fundraising is also influenced by the staff resources available to organizations, of which human rights organizations have more. Although fewer than one in four (24%) have at least one staff member dedicated to

fundraising (full-time or part-time), this equates to twice the dedicated fundraising staff of other organizations (11% of which have such staff).

Interviewees emphasized financial stability as necessary for carrying out their organizations' statutory activities, including identifying human rights violations, collecting incident data, analyzing and disseminating the results, promoting public awareness, and lobbying for institutional means to halt those violations. Financial stability is equally important for organizational development and professionalization. The Polish governing party and its allies in civil society and the media, as well as regional and local administrations, suppress human rights ideas by oppressing the organizational forms that transmit those ideas. The governing party and its allies are equipped with a variety of coercive means that target human rights organizations; avoidance of dependency on the state through diversification of funding and innovative approaches to fundraising are the main strategic responses available to such organizations. In the next section, we focus on more proactive tactics that allow them to challenge the legitimacy of the state's claims.

Symbolic Resources

As mentioned above, human rights organizations have been subject to smear campaigns and defamation. For instance, several women's and LGBTQI+ rights organizations, such as Ponton, Autonomia, and Feminoteka, have been repeatedly accused in the public media and in public statements by various politicians of misusing public funds for private purposes as well as for promoting foreign, liberal values that are destroying the institution of the Polish family (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Similar efforts have been aimed at other organizations with the purposes of creating a hostile environment for human rights organizations and undermining their ability to address the public, form coalitions, and accumulate funding. The values in the name of which human rights organizations work—for instance, gender equality, LGBTQI+ rights, support for refugees and migrants—have been used by representatives of the ruling party to excite public sentiment and to play out the conflict between supporters of mainstream conservative views and their

opponents with liberal and leftist views. In 2019, equality marches in Rzeszów, Kielce, Lublin, and several other cities were banned by local authorities, while in Białystok members of a peaceful assembly were physically attacked by adherents of radical right groups; law enforcement authorities failed to react adequately (USAID, 2019).

Nevertheless, these organizations continue to engage in actions to influence the public debate; they draft public letters and petitions, organize street-based mass protests, and run information campaigns. The social significance of this group of organizations is in the explicit opposition they present to the political regime established since 2015. Moreover, human rights organizations arouse much more intense emotions in representatives of Polish society than other civil society organizations—not only negative (going so far as to be manifested in physical attacks) but also strongly positive (resulting in support through donations or voluntary work, among other forms). They are also more visible and recognizable than other organizations. According to a survey conducted in November 2020 (Portal organizacji pozarządowych, 2020), Poles are much more likely to encounter organizations dealing with gender equality, LGBTQI+ rights, or defending democracy than those working with sport, culture, or local development organizations (of which there are many more in Poland).

One distinguishing feature of human rights organizations is that they can challenge the legitimacy of state attacks by emphasizing the consistency of the norms that they represent, their strong identification with their mission, and a sense of being active members of society pursuing specific goals. It can be concluded that these organizations are characterized by consistent and firm views on their missions and high degrees of integrity in defending them. In contrast to the academic debate about mission drift (Jones, 2007) and “grantosis” (Socha, 2011), that is, instrumental adaptation of the activities of civil society organizations to please grant benefactors, the human rights organizations in this study were quite uncompromising and determined to stand by their missions. As one respondent asserted: “We don’t adjust to what is on the market, what they give money for” (R1). Furthermore, human rights organizations were more prone than other civil society organizations in Poland to take risks in order to fulfill their missions. Interviewees also stressed that

independence is crucial for success in their missions: “We are not dependent on the city or other public institutions” [R2]. These elements indicate a strong sense of integrity of mission among civil society organizations.

The interviews indicated that human rights organizations think not only in terms of social inclusion or the emancipation of certain groups but also in terms of responsibility for minority groups in general:

It seems to me that we represent a movement of organizations, people, activists, female activists, who work for an open civil society engaged in social life, where undervalued groups can meet with emancipating actions, dominant groups can meet with actions introducing thinking about the minority perspective or educating for inclusion. Such an organization is a real puzzle in this construction of civil society. (R1)

The respondent quoted above saw their organization as an important intermediary gluing together the various parts of Polish society. This puzzle piece renders the society a democratic whole, teaching the majority about their responsibilities and the minority about their rights. Several interviewees stressed that the purpose of their activities was not only to support excluded groups but first of all to build a civil society in which the needs of all people are met and their rights equally protected. As Table 4.2 illustrates, the notion that civil society organizations’ role is to exert influence over various stakeholders at the national level to solve important social problems finds more significant support among representatives of human rights organizations (more than 50% of respondents) than among civil society organizations on average (approximately 41%). This is striking, considering that human rights organizations are regularly attacked by state agencies and state-controlled media outlets.

The self-identification of human rights organizations and the assessment of their place in the third sector hinges upon this broader perspective and the sense of responsibility they have for Polish society. Regardless of the main direction of statutory activity of the interviewed organizations, they stressed their fundamental role as helping *all* those who need assistance. They also underscored that all social activity should be based on wide cooperation within the sector, regardless of differences in

Table 4.2 Organizations' understanding of their missions and places in society

	Human rights organizations	Civil society organizations (average)
Statement 1. NGOs generally have a strong influence on solving important social problems on a national scale		
Strongly agree	16.7	14.7
Agree	37.0	27.0
Neither agree nor disagree	11.1	20.6
Disagree	21.3	16.9
Strongly disagree	11.1	8.6
Difficult to say	2.8	12.2
Statement 2. Each organization should take care of its own development first, so there is no point in creating a vision for the development of the whole sector		
Strongly agree	5.6	7.9
Agree	4.6	17.0
Neither agree nor disagree	13.0	20.9
Disagree	32.4	28.9
Strongly disagree	39.0	15.2
Difficult to say	5.6	10.2
Statement 3. Cooperation between different organizations is very difficult or even impossible due to political divisions in Polish society		
Strongly agree	10.2	9.3
Agree	23.2	22.0
Neither agree nor disagree	23.2	27.2
Disagree	32.4	15.9
Strongly disagree	4.6	8.6
Difficult to say	6.5	17.0
<i>N</i>	1232 ^a	108

Source: reworked from Klon/Jawor (2019b, pp. 9–10, 13)

Note: Respondents were asked to express their opinions about the given statements

^a For Statement 3, N=1231

worldview. In the polarized post-2015 social climate, this seems an even greater challenge. However, human rights organizations appear comparatively strongly convinced that organizations should work together to create a common vision for the development of the sector. Compared to the sector as a whole, they are much more likely to reject a statement suggesting that each organization should primarily focus on its own development (44%, compared to 71% in the sector as a whole) (Table 4.2). Although human rights organizations suffer more from the divisions in Polish society than do less politically salient civil society organizations,

these organizations stand out with their strong belief in the possibility of agreement across divisions. Thirty-seven percent of human rights organizations and twenty-five percent of the sample of civil society organizations overall disagreed with the statement that “cooperation between organizations is highly difficult or even impossible due to political divisions in Polish society” (Table 4.2).

Identifying strongly with the broader development of society and contributing to its democratization with their activities, human rights organizations feel empowered by the accompanying sense of agency:

I am motivated by the fact that someone comes to us and it turns out that this is what they were looking for. Then such a person thinks that it is possible to live here, to function somehow in this country. (R4)

The belief in their own agency and in organizations’ impact on their environment, as well as the sense of cooperation that characterizes human rights organizations, helps them to challenge the validity and consistency of the coercive institutional norms in place and to overcome the uncertainty inherent in their environment, thus defying the pressures it imposes. The symbolic resources that human rights organizations have accumulated over time, in the forms of strong mission integrity and a sense of being an important puzzle piece in Polish society, as well as sector solidarity and a sense of agency in solving social problems, helps these organizations survive in a hostile environment. They feel that what they do is not only important for them as organizations and their immediate constituents and beneficiaries but also crucial for the entire society. In the strongly polarized Polish society, and in the face of the pushbacks from the government and the media that have been occurring since 2015, this symbolic resilience becomes a means of (re)generating other resources.

Human Resources

One of the lines of attack against civil society organizations in Poland has been focused on creating division within civil society as well as between organizations and their constituents and target groups. For instance, in

their program from 2014, the Law and Justice party framed their illiberal populist agenda by presenting civil society organizations as not only professional and bureaucratized, but as elitist and much better off than the citizenry and, thus, an impediment to direct democratic participation (Korolczuk, 2021). As in other East European countries, the supposed professionalization and elitism of civil society organizations has been explained by the dominance of organizational cultures introduced through international networks of partners and donors (Kuti, 1999). However, the local embeddedness of individual norms, motivations, commitment opportunities, and engagement patterns for the institutionalization and development of civil society organizations, as well as variations in these elements, have also been demonstrated (Chimiak, 2006; see also Chimiak, Chap. 9 in this volume). In our analysis, we thoroughly consider the places of individuals in their organizations as well as the contributions they make in various organizational roles. We also trace the ways in which discursive pressures—such as the characterization of those working in human rights organizations as serving foreign or their own interests to the detriment of Polish values—impact human resources in these organizations.

In this study, we distinguish between several groups of people involved in the activities of associations and foundations: employees, volunteers, and experts cooperating with organizations. In all, 60% of civil society organizations in Poland have no employees. Among those that employ personnel, the majority of organizations have no more than five employees. In 2018, the entire non-profit sector employed 176,600 people, many of them part-time, and 86.7% of all civil society organizations declared using volunteers—approximately 3.3 million people in total, of whom 71.2% were members (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2020).³ Sixty-six percent of human rights organizations in our study had paid permanent staff members; 39% of those studied employed at least one person on a permanent employment contract, and the remaining 27% used other, less permanent types of contracts such as commission agreements. The employment rate among human rights organizations is thus almost twice that of the broader sector. Among all civil society organizations, 37% of organizations had permanent staff teams, with 19% offering permanent employment contracts. Only 18% of human rights organizations

based their activities solely on volunteering, while 36% of all civil society organizations relied exclusively on community service.

Despite the fact that human rights organizations employ permanent staff more regularly than the sector as a whole, they also demonstrate a tendency to use civil law contracts as a basis for cooperations. Our interviews showed that hiring employees on the basis of employment contracts remains rare. When it takes place, it is often in the case of project coordinators who are employed for the project implementation period. Characteristic for most human rights organizations is that their employees also work professionally in other entities, including corporations and administrative institutions but also other civil society organizations:

Each of us [board members] runs a business, so we don't sign employment contracts [with the civil society organizations], but those are our decisions. Our organization tries to provide employment contracts to people so that we don't massively generate commission contracts. We really want to plan to get grants in such a way that there is continuity of staff. We are starting to think about whether to change the statute and allow for remunerating people on the board, because the amount of work is enormous. (R8)

In the field of volunteering, human rights organizations stressed that there was room for improvement and development of more professional approaches. Currently, more ad hoc campaign volunteering prevails over systematic recruitment and engagement of volunteers. None of the interviewed organizations had a person responsible for coordinating volunteers; rather, volunteers were sought for specific projects. These are, admittedly, problems shared with the entire third sector in Poland. The specific characteristics of volunteer work require guidance from those more permanently immersed in the organization. Such engagement, however, demands resources in terms of the time of permanent staff; as stated by one interviewee, "Volunteers come and go. It is hard with volunteers if we don't have fixed working hours. Someone has to train them; someone has to prepare them" (R9).

Nevertheless, 80% of human rights organizations work with volunteers.⁴ In the sector as a whole, civil society organizations using voluntary support are significantly fewer at 63%. Human rights organizations not

only work more frequently with volunteers but also have larger volunteer teams than do other associations and foundations. Moreover, human rights organizations have increased the sizes of volunteer teams in the last year, despite the fact that these organizations report the same levels of recruitment activities as the other civil society organizations. The broader recognizability of human rights organizations with respect to other civil society organizations might be an important factor explaining the relative ease with which they recruit volunteers. Another explanation might be that in the face of governmental attacks and the illiberal orientation of government policies, a greater portion of society feels the urge to help these organizations.

Interviewees stressed that the organizational mission is a strong factor in the motivations of potential volunteers. According to interviewees, the fact that an organization works for equality and human rights was of great importance for those providing services on a volunteer basis. Respondents pointed out that potential volunteers are attracted by their sharing of ideas recognizable in an organization's activities or by a community of values. On the other hand, a mission that involves counteracting discrimination, such as anti-Semitism, and protecting human rights also limits the circle of potentially interested parties: one interviewee admitted that "I think our mission statement can make it a little harder to get volunteers. Not everyone wants to volunteer at a place with 'Jewish' in the name" (R2).

Involvement in the activities of organizations with a specific profile often requires specific knowledge; for instance, an organization supporting migrants is much more likely to need translators than accountants. It is also a challenge to organize peer volunteering or to involve the target group as volunteers. The following statement demonstrates that human rights organizations with specific missions attract volunteers with specific views and expectations: "I think our message is important, that we are a safe organization in that broad sense. We use equality language, sensitive to different identities" (R1).

In interviewees' opinions, the political situation in Poland was an important factor motivating citizens to engage in the activities of human rights organizations. In fact, all interviewees referred to this issue. For example: "Politics has kicked in so much, people are so mad that they will

do anything and get socially involved” (R2). Greater social mobilization and support for human rights organizations can be seen as an unintended result of the government-orchestrated attacks on these very organizations. The difficulties faced by human rights organizations, and their uncompromising nature, act as a magnet for like-minded people. The salience of the unresolved and growing polarization in Poland (Tworzecki, 2019) is propelling human rights organizations into national and international prominence.

As far as cooperations between human rights organizations and experts are concerned, it must be emphasized that expert backgrounds are an important asset. Experts are often members of an organization, but just as often, they are allies. The interviewed representatives of human rights organizations surrounded themselves with specialists in various fields such as law, psychology, and sociology:

We have been working with the same people for years. What changes is the level of their education. One of the psychologists has chosen to further her studies in order to improve her qualifications and be able to help us more. (R3)

However, in the context of cooperation with experts and external experts, discouragement or even burnout can arise. In the words of one of the interviewees:

I have a feeling that the experts [...] are waning. They literally don't have the energy to deal with it anymore. If they feel that they are kicking the horse all the time, they either need a break, or they need to change their occupation altogether. (R7)

It is this discouragement, combined with the difficult situation in which human rights organizations find themselves and official hostility toward human rights, that adversely affects the motivation not only of external experts but also of staff and volunteer teams.

As the evidence suggests, human rights organizations mobilize employees, volunteers, and experts to resist institutional pressures by offering more stable employment contracts and working consistently in recruitment and engagement. Although they often lack the means and skills to

manage volunteers and absorb the costs of engagement for individuals and for the organizations—which sometimes involve threats to physical safety—they reach out to their stakeholders as bearers of ideals of social justice and equality, displaying integrity of mission and subverting negative media campaigns. The persistent conflict between the protagonists of human rights and democracy and the radical right-wing political regime not only diminishes the regime’s legitimacy but regenerates the connection between human rights organizations and those stakeholders that take on volunteer roles, thus exerting external pressures of their own.

Social Resources

In the past, horizontal cooperation, norms of solidarity, and civic participation were commonly considered to be lacking among professionalized, often foreign-funded, advocacy-oriented organizations across Eastern Europe (Jacobsson & Saxonberg, 2013a). Accountability to external donors and an inability to connect human rights and democracy to local needs and concerns were seen as barriers to building social (and human) capital, resulting in fragmentation and interorganizational competition (Fagan, 2005; Henderson, 2002; Jacobsson, 2012). Although Polish civil society has been a part of this trend, sectorial infrastructure is also well developed in the country. Civil society organizations continue to have access to various support centers, locally and online, thus obtaining information on both funding opportunities and training (USAID, 2019). They also frequently cooperate and form coalitions; for instance, the formally registered Great Coalition for Equal Opportunities gathered more than eighty organizations standing for women’s rights, and nine organizations are members of an informal consortium on refugee and migrant issues.

Human rights organizations are especially well connected with other actors. In line with the ambition to become important actors contributing to the greater society “through dialogue, through openness” (R3), they make efforts to develop broad and active networks. They cultivate more contacts with various partners: “We work with everyone around a particular issue. That is a big value for us” (R10). As another interviewee said, “We are not the kind of environment that burns bridges” (R1).

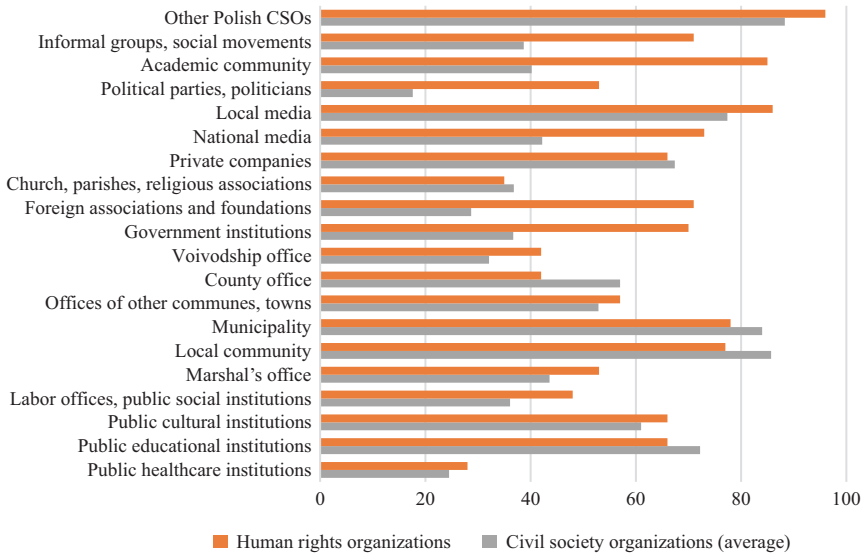


Fig. 4.2 Human rights organizations and their partners. (Source: Klon/Jawor (2019b, p. 31))

Figure 4.2 illustrates the variety of organizations with which human rights organizations in our study partnered. The results of the survey demonstrate that the most important partner for human rights organizations is Polish civil society—as many as 96% of human rights organizations have relationships with other civil society organizations. The second most important partner is the local media (86%), and the third is the academic community (85%). Interestingly, in the ranking of partners among all civil society organizations, local media are ranked fourth (77% of all organizations have relationships with them) and the academic world is not even in the top ten (40%). More developed connections with academics might be explained by the relationships formed in the preparation of expert reports commissioned by human rights organizations.

There are significant differences in the ways in which human rights organizations build their social capital as well as in the connections they choose to cultivate. On one hand, human rights organizations have many more contacts than all civil society organizations with national media and

government institutions as well as informal groups, political parties, and politicians. On the other hand, they have fewer relationships with local governments, local communities, and district authorities. Certainly, maintaining contacts with nationwide partners (ministries, media) is facilitated by the nationwide scale of activities typical for human rights organizations. That same feature, in turn, translates into less frequent relations with local partners and fewer direct connections to local constituencies.

However, and unsurprisingly, the interviewed organizational representatives pointed to relative difficulty in recent cooperations with public institutions in the context of the closing democratic space (Smith, 2018). Such cooperations, both with national and local governments, are conditioned by political factors. The replacement of a governmental decision-maker may influence the direction of a cooperation or even result in its complete termination, regardless of its success to that point. In addition, human rights organizations seem to be a much more consolidated group of civil society organizations than other groups of organizations with aligned missions. Almost all human rights organizations (94%) declared that other civil society organizations active in the field of human rights were key partners in their activities. Lastly, human rights organizations are much better connected to foreign civil society organizations than are those in the broader sector; 71% of human rights organizations are part of international networks, while only 29% of all Polish civil society organizations maintain relations with foreign organizations.

Interviewees revealed that the specificity of the work of human rights organizations involves substantive cooperation with various entities, such as legal authorities, international human rights institutions, academic centers, and research networks. It should be added that almost all of the studied organizations had experience managing educational activities for children, young people, and educational staff (according to the results of the survey, 66% of human rights organizations have contacts with schools). These specific contacts and activities, however, have become more difficult since 2015. It was pointed out that, in recent years, schools have closed themselves off from such cooperations and abandoned human rights training for students. As one interviewee explained:

We had an unpleasant experience during anti-discrimination workshops. The city office put pressure on schools. I know that there were unofficial talks with school principals so that they would not register young people for our workshops. (R1)

These discouragements were seen as politically motivated, that is, as attempts to turn teachers and students against liberal values: “In my opinion these are very political decisions, what subject matter is good and what subject matter is not and what we are going to teach our teachers” (R8). The politicization of anti-discrimination topics has forced human rights organizations to move classes to their headquarters and, as a result, to step back from direct contact with students. Since 2015, these organizations more often train teachers, who can then use the shared content in their lessons.

In summary, in the current environmental context, characterized by the political regime’s attacks on fundamental democratic institutions such as the rule of law and freedom of speech and assembly, as well as its enabling of discrimination and its intimidation of civil society organizations, Polish human rights organizations have been mobilizing into inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral networks. In terms of institutional pressures, this tactic creates an alternative source of pressure: that of constituents and peers. The expression of solidarity through coalitions and consortia is intended to alleviate environmental uncertainty and to stimulate collective defiance and/or manipulation of the norms and demands imposed by the state. Relational networks also serve to support and elaborate collective values, presenting a coherent and stable narrative to oppose the values and myths proliferated by official state narratives.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined Polish human rights organizations, which are facing increased regulatory, political, and financial constraints on their operations. In our analysis, based on Christine Oliver’s (1991) theoretical framework bringing together institutional and resource dependence theories, we have identified strategic responses developed by human rights

organizations as they strive for continued autonomy and survival. In Oliver's original conceptualization, the sources of institutional norms that constrain or enable organizations are intangible, with multiple institutional agencies. In our case, however, institutional pressures are defined specifically as those emanating from the state's regulatory structures and its affiliates. The political regime established in Poland since 2015 has been undermining democratic institutions, decreasing government's accountability to its citizenry, and increasing pressures on nongovernmental actors, especially civil society organizations, to comply with its illiberal norms and practices. Such pressures have taken the forms of diminished financial support, smear campaigns, and intimidation practices that have affected the scope of the economic, symbolic, human, and social resources available to civil society.

As our analysis demonstrates, human rights organizations compensate for the instability and the smaller scope of state funding by diversifying their sources of revenues, expanding their base of constituents, and building the capacity of their staffs, members, and volunteers. These organizations mobilize their own symbols and the meanings attributed to their missions through information and fundraising campaigns to present an oppositional normative framework and rally societal support. They strive for a coherent representation of their values and goals, simultaneously challenging the cohesiveness of the regime's illiberal agenda. Human rights organizations stand out in the context of broader civil society; with their stronger integrity of mission and belief in their potential to positively affect societal processes, they may go so far as to risk their personal safety in order to achieve success. This sense of agency strengthens their propensity to endure in a challenging environment. Resource convertibility becomes a resource in itself: organizations' integrity of mission helps them attract volunteers, and their sense of responsibility for the entirety of Polish society translates to broader cooperation patterns across political divides.

Human rights organizations use the interconnectedness of their organizational environment to challenge the state's illiberal narrative and to respond to its threats. The effervescent character of the Polish civil society that emerged in the process of institutional adjustment within the associational sphere inherited from the state-socialist political regime, and the

new organizations that appeared in its aftermath (Ekiert & Kubik, 2013, 2014), resist the closing of the democratic space in Poland. The institutional pressures, while significant, are not monolithic. Whereas the state threatens the mission or survival of human rights organizations, other actors show support and reinforce their commitment to human rights and democracy. Under such circumstances, yielding to institutional pressures would diminish organizational legitimacy in society rather than increasing it. Resistance, on the other hand, utilizes fragmentation, polarization, and contention; connects human rights organizations to their constituents and other organizations; and brings visibility and resources.

Notes

1. In order to preserve respondents' confidentiality, we do not disclose the details of organizations' profiles.
2. A funding program run as an international collaboration between Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway aiming to reduce social and economic disparities in the European Economic Area (EEA) and to strengthen bilateral relations with fifteen EU countries in central and southern Europe. Taking part in this program is a condition for these countries to gain access to the common internal market of the EU.
3. The GUS methodology includes trade unions and political parties as non-governmental organizations.
4. In contrast to GUS, the Klon/Jawor Association does not include members in their definition of volunteers.

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5

Rural Community Development in Sweden: From Challenging to Mainstream?

Anette Forsberg

Introduction

During fieldwork in a rural village in the northern inlands of Sweden, an elderly woman asked about the reason for my presence, and I responded that I was there to study village development. She retorted: “You must mean abandonment” (Forsberg, 2010). For residents of sparsely populated rural areas, the term “development” connotes *urban* development, while in a rural context it has come to mean the opposite: loss of people, loss of jobs, and loss of faith in the future. This chapter focuses on what is defined in Sweden as the village movement (*byarörelsen*), local development work (*lokalt utvecklingsarbete*), and local development groups (*lokala utvecklingsgrupper*). These forms of civil society mobilization (re-) emerged as a result of the 1987–1989 rural campaign “All of Sweden Shall Live!” (*Hela Sverige ska leva!*). In 2019, more than 5000 community groups and 40 member organizations were registered.¹ These

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organizations work with a broad variety of issues and organizational forms, from sports associations to local parishes, from social enterprises to mutual aid associations. They engage with environmental issues, tourism, education and child care, housing, and elderly care (Herlitz, 2000). Although the organizations represent different interests, they may be considered a single, established social movement due to their distinct organizational structure, shared objectives, strategies, and activities.

The aim of this chapter is to reflect on the perspectives and values expressed in Swedish rural movements in relation to a change in structural conditions for the development of civil society that took place in the late 1980s, when new resources were made available to civil society organizations. This change was one consequence of a new direction in government policies necessitated by Sweden's integration into the expanding European Union, and, I argue, it affected the preconditions for how civil society organizations accumulated resources and how they used them. I support my position by depicting the development of the village movement over the past 40 years, focusing specifically on the national shift toward rural development that followed Sweden's signing of the European treaties in 1995; what started as a politically challenging rural movement lost its contentious character when supranational structural and investment funding became available. The development of the Swedish village movement and its consequences are also discussed in the broader context of rural movements in Europe and global transformation trends in the civil society landscape.

I retain the commonly used terms *local development* and *local development groups* to refer to the village movement and community work undertaken by local groups in rural areas. Most of these groups are organized as voluntary associations, but among them are also small-scale neo-cooperatives (coops) and women's networks. The terms *village group* and *local group* are used synonymously.

Local development work has been defined by cultural geographers in terms of place ideology (Herlitz, 2000), place-related kinship, and social movements (Berglund, 1998). Gunnarsdotter (2005) understands rural communities as kinships defined by time and space, while Ekman (2008) analyzes people's understandings of rural community in terms of rooms of experience holding collective and individual memories. With a

humanistic perspective and drawing on my own earlier fieldwork experiences and other existing research, I understand local development work and action as an existential agenda that struggles for the value and visibility of rural communities and people on their own terms (Forsberg, 2010).

The data for this study come from my own extensive ethnographic fieldwork between 2001 and 2005, during which time I carried out observations of participants' daily operations and various project activities as well as in-depth interviews with village movement activists in Trehörningsjö, a small and sparsely populated community in Västernorrlands County. Located approximately 600 kilometers north of Stockholm, Trehörningsjö is home to about 200 inhabitants. The fieldwork provided me with new perspectives and insights that became crucial to my understanding, while documentation generated by the movement, policy documents, and developments complemented my ethnographic approach. The choice of ethnographic fieldwork as the research method allowed me to explore not only the rather unproblematic (economic) development discourse but also a more politically challenging and locally grounded discourse of struggle for community, which I regard as an existential perspective.

Rural Movements in Europe Defying the Urban Norm

Rural mobilization as local action for rural life and communities has been studied as a social phenomenon more closely at the national level than at the European level. For instance, Svendsen (2004) describes two strong agriculturalist discourses in Denmark, where a traditionalist discourse based on farmers' protectionist perspectives has been challenged by that of non-agricultural elites, featuring community, culture, environment, and active citizenship as keywords for change. At the same time, research demonstrates that the issues that underpin rural mobilization cannot be contained by the specificity of the rural experience; rather, they spill over to broader regional political agendas. Marsden et al. (2004) explored how parallel arenas for mobilization in rural regions of Finland and Wales

have formed and challenged rural and governance structures. In several developed nations, Woods (2003) identified a range of contentious mobilization around such issues as agricultural reforms, the legality of hunting, road development, and service provision as an emergent social movement that advocates for a new politics of the rural.

The internationalization of this phenomenon has been linked to the first village action groups formed in Finland and Sweden in the 1970s, which then spread across Europe (Halhead, 2005, 2006) through cooperation and networking. In 2005, the European Rural Alliance was formed. The main characteristics of these movements were that they were structured, locally focused, supportive, informed, coordinated, influential (undertaking advocacy to influence policy at the local, regional, national, and international levels), and internationally connected through networks. Structuring the movements at each administrative level—local, regional, and national—was also a key feature. The structure of each movement reflected its national context. While the Nordic movements were based on village-level action or mobilization, the movements established in Eastern Europe (except Estonia) and in the United Kingdom were based on the model of a rural forum or network of organizations.

However, the similarities between the rural areas and national contexts of each country are greater than the differences. Halhead (2005, 2006), having studied the evolution and impact of national village movements in several countries, states that the *rural*, as a specific political perspective considered at the European level, is established and promoted by rural movements that advocate Europe-wide against a common issue: the urbanization trend. This trend, as I see it, is based on politics, structures, and ideals. Politics and development are formed on certain ideals and norms that tend to favor urbanness as modern, innovative, and futuristic while dismissing ruralness as traditional, non-innovative, or at best exotic. Halhead (2006) describes rural and village movements in Europe as a response to a continuing process of rural decline that has occurred at different times in different countries, starting in the Nordic countries as early as the 1960s and in Eastern European countries as late as the 1990s. The failure of national governments and the European Union to fully address this process, focusing too much on an agricultural agenda and

leaving aside broader structural changes and “the special characteristics of rural areas” (ibid., p. 597), has motivated these movements.

Especially interesting in Halhead’s studies, interlinking with my own, is her view of rural movements as special models of development that deserve recognition and support. As such, they can be understood as countermovements to the European internal market and the globalization of markets, which tend to put economic growth and urban development first (Eikenberry, 2009; Eikenberry & Drapal Kluver, 2004). Government is, by definition, remote from rural villages and must trust rural people to build rural communities. The role of governments is to provide frameworks and policies. In order to do so, they should communicate with rural movement bodies. Bearing the European context in mind, I present the case of Swedish rural movements in relation to resource mobilization landscapes, focusing on the reemergence of the village movement in the 1980s and its development continuing to the present time.

The Rural Situation and Early Rural Mobilization in Sweden

Like many other countries throughout the world, Sweden underwent an enormous rural–urban transformation during the twentieth century. In 1900, approximately 75% of the Swedish population lived in the countryside, whereas 25% lived in cities. Nowadays, 85% of the population lives in cities (Statistics Sweden, 2015a). Relocation from rural to urban areas peaked between the 1930s and the 1970s. Traditionally, urbanization has focused on domestic relocation, and the urban population continues to grow, although this growth is statistically no longer accounted for solely by people relocating from rural areas; rather, the dynamics for a growing urban population combine such factors as migration and birth rate with domestic relocation (Statistics Sweden, 2015a). Sweden, with a land area of 407,000 square kilometers, a settling rate of 3% of the land area (in 2015), and a population density of 25.1 inhabitants per square kilometer (in 2018, compared to 117.7 in the 28 European Union

member states), is relatively sparsely populated (Statistics Sweden, 2015b, 2020). The trends of urbanization, the transformation of the urban population, and the dramatic decrease in population in many rural areas form a frame of reference for the village movement.

Organizing in voluntary associations to uphold rural communities has developed concurrently with a loss of people, services, and jobs. The centralization of public services and care, alongside inferior access to commercial services in rural areas, entails traveling long distances in order to obtain care and services. Village inhabitants are faced with a reality in which schools, libraries, food stores, petrol stations, services, and care are disappearing. The Swedish government has presented a local service strategy to ensure that basic levels of commercial and public services are maintained in communities “with low or very low access to urban centers” (SOU, 2015, p. 35), a description that applies to most parts of northern Sweden. This strategy is put into practice in the form of “aid” to rural people and businesses in sparsely populated municipalities (*ibid.*, pp. 18–19). Definitions of rural and sparsely populated areas, in Sweden as well as globally, differ greatly according to aim and organizational body. Regardless of how the terms are defined, people living in rural and sparsely populated areas have developed counterstrategies to urbanization and centralization.

The constitution of voluntary associations in rural areas sheds some light on the driving forces behind village mobilization. The years 1945, 1970, and 1987 represented breaking points for mobilization (Herlitz, 1998). At the end of World War II (1945), the number of voluntary groups doubled. Alongside the second municipality reform (1962–1974), when small municipalities were made into bigger entities and political decision-making was centralized, the number of groups tripled. The strongest increase appeared after the 1980s rural campaign “All of Sweden Shall Live!”. As elaborated upon in the next section, the rural campaign was launched as a reaction to the continued impoverishment of rural and sparsely populated areas, and it aimed to place rural issues on the political agenda. Regardless of the circumstances, mobilizing in voluntary associations comes across as a village strategy for influence and securing rural community rights.

The Start of the Village Movement: A Contentious Agenda with Political and Existential Claims

In the 1980s and 1990s, the overall (and still discernible) feeling in many villages was a sense that the end of village life was approaching. The abovementioned national campaign, “All of Sweden Shall Live!”, active from 1987 until 1989, emanated from a rural campaign at the European level. In Sweden, it came to play an important role in mobilizing local groups for village action. It was launched as both a politically initiated strategy to highlight the importance of rural life and as a grassroots initiative. The campaign mobilized rural actors, placed questions relevant to the rural way of life on the political agenda, and gave rise to the movement’s breakthrough. Both the campaign and the movement started out with political aims of rural change with a frame of reference focusing on enforcing local-level agency, participation, and influence.

Here, I would like to return to Halhead (2006) to briefly consider the Swedish rural movement in a broader perspective. The author states that rural movements generally aspire to influence policy at all levels. At the Swedish Rural Parliament of 2004, rural movements were defined as the “linking of rural people and interests who wish to create change in rural areas by working together” (Halhead, 2006, p. 603). European rural movements express discontent with government unresponsiveness and with the difficulties of advocacy, all the while both applying for government funding and expressing concern that receiving that funding will affect their ability to remain neutral. Halhead states: “Only in Sweden has the government played a strongly supportive role, through provision of funding, manpower and practical support” (ibid., p. 609). Engaged politicians, civil servants, and researchers played a vital role in highlighting rural voice and agency for rural development, which was initially a strong ambition within all rural movements. Support structures at the national and regional levels, partly financed by the government, contributed to something of a rural development wave with a combination of activities, actions, and organizations.

The phrase “village movement” was launched as a generic term for a new, expanding effort, a diverse mixture of organizations and associations that acted jointly for the rural cause. Starting in the 1990s, as the scope of the welfare state began to decrease, the role of civil society in welfare provision as a part of rural development increased. The village movement’s diversity, with its variety of activities and with the local community as a platform for action, separates it from traditional popular movements such as the temperance movement or the sports movement (Herlitz, 1998; see also Kings, Chap. 8 in this volume). The main characteristic of the village movement is that it acts for the community as a whole rather than for specific interest groups. Another important feature is that quite a few groups named themselves “future” groups of their communities, reflecting the movement’s spirit of mobilization and belief in a better future for rural communities (Forsberg, 2001). In addition, the focus was set on actual local (rural) questions, problems, and possibilities, regardless of actors’ political affiliations.

Village groups themselves consistently rank community events like cultural and societal activities, that is, collective activities, as the most important (Forsberg, 2001, 2010; Herlitz, 1998). Festivities, community centers, and culture in a broad sense are at the heart of the matter. The recreating and upholding of the rural community as a whole are central results of local development work but are less often discussed in the political sphere. Other issues in which groups engage include the environment, education, tourism, local markets, youth activities, study visits, roads, newsletters, sports fields, bathing places, walking and riding nature trails, information technology, schools, libraries, grocery stores, housing, business, communication, and child and elderly care.²

The demographic composition of the movement is characterized by the prominent position of women as compared to that of other social movements in Sweden. However, there are as many men as women active in the village movement, and men tend to be placed in leading positions as contact persons or association committee chairs with somewhat greater frequency (Forsberg, 2001; Herlitz, 1998; Westlund, 2007). In general, the actors are middle-aged or older persons (Forsberg, 2003). Youths are not, to a great extent, members of community associations in rural areas, and a shortage of young people has been mentioned as a problem within

the movement. However, the first project undertaken by the village movement was a youth project, and young people have begun to mobilize on their own terms with support from the movement.

The broad spectrum of activities and engagement reveal that local development work is about more than economic issues. It designs a holistic community agenda with social, cultural, and economic issues running parallel to one another. Multidisciplinary research—encompassing disciplines such as cultural geography, sociology, ethnology, political science, cultural anthropology, and business economics—has shown that community development in Swedish rural areas encompasses a wide range of aims and activities for service, employment, belonging, equality, infrastructure, local democracy, social work, and the upholding as well as the reconstruction of local identity (Forsberg, 2018; Rönby, 1994, 1995; Turunen, 2002, 2010). This is interesting to compare to studies of local action in urban areas, where the organizing of everyday life through club activities ascribes certain values to a neighborhood (Kings, 2011). Local place and local identity go hand in hand.

A common problem among movements in all categories is funding their efforts in ways that allow for less reliance on volunteer work. All movements strive to become more effective in their advocacy role and therefore seek to become governmental partners rather than governmental advisors. Some of the prominent individuals in the Swedish rural campaign were the same ones who had acted strongly to push forward rural agendas in regional politics during the 1970s. They were politicians and civil servants and came to hold influential positions within the movement. Their (political) standpoints and positions formed mobilizing strategies that combined top-down and bottom-up methods, had strong democratic as well as feminist ambitions, and provided state funding initiatives that could turn ideas into action.

At the same time, the movement needed to remain independent and to give advice as a representative of civil society. The willingness to attempt to apply locally based models for service, care, and governance was present, as were strategies to support the mobilization and organization of specific target groups such as rural women and young people (Forsberg, 2013). The local level was addressed as a fourth administrative level for decision-making. The movement supported innovative models for

dialogue, democracy, and collaboration between local groups and municipalities. Methods and models that invited rural inhabitants/actors to take part in social community planning were spread to municipalities by means of several projects administered by the movement (Olsson & Forsberg, 1997). One such project led to the creation of community boards for local decision-making; a few of the community boards formed in the 1990s remain in use, for example, in Svågadalen and Kallbygden.³

The Economic Turn in Rural Policies and Politics

Until the early 2000s, funding and projects were administered by the government as local people and groups learned new methods and invested in voluntary work for their communities. The Swedish National Rural Development Agency (*Glesbygdsverket*), a Swedish governmental body operative between 1991 and 2009, played an important economic as well as supportive role in managing research projects and producing reports that delivered knowledge of rural situations and local development work.⁴ It presented, for the first time, a gender perspective on regional development (Friberg, 1993) and delivered studies on the role of women in rural mobilization (Bull, 1991, 1993, 1995; Frånberg, 1994). There were connections between the rural field and governmental bodies in terms of people, knowledge, and resources.

This would change as governmental bodies shifted from rural and broad perspectives toward a more limited focus on entrepreneurialism and economic growth. In 2009, the Swedish National Rural Development Agency was discontinued. In its place, new governmental bodies were launched: the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (*Tillväxtverket*) and the Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis (*Tillväxtanalys, Myndigheten för tillväxtpolitiska utvärderingar och analyser*). They complement the Swedish Board of Agriculture (*Jordbruksverket*), which has existed since 1991 to promote rural development based on the structure and programs of the European Union. The knowledge base shifted and adapted according to the European Union's growth agenda, based on the Lisbon strategy for 2000–2010 (Johansson et al. 2007; Lisbon European Council, 2000) and the Europe 2020 strategy for

2010–2020 (European Commission, 2010), both of which strongly urged economic growth. The social and cultural impacts of village activities, well known and described in research as vital for upholding community in a broad sense, were no longer in focus as important in themselves; rather, they were indirectly included in political documents as forms of social capital with importance for business, growth, and attractive environments.

An economic approach is also stressed in the European Union's structural funds, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF, 2013), and the European Social Fund (ESF, 2013). Co-financed national programs have made the funds available to local development groups. However, the Swedish bureaucratic system has made it difficult for village groups to receive such funding (Forsberg, 2009, 2010). EU countries prepare their own rural development programs to meet national and regional needs within the framework of the EU. The Swedish Rural Development Program 2014–2020 was co-funded by the European Union and Sweden, with the intention to promote growth, competitiveness, entrepreneurship, and employment (European Commission, 2019; Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, 2015). The program administered a total of 36 billion SEK (3.8 billion Euro) and was managed by the Swedish Board of Agriculture. Like other European structural funds, the Rural Development Program in Sweden took on a rather bureaucratic structure with an overall goal of "smart and sustainable growth for everyone," in line with the Europe 2020 strategy (European Commission, 2010). The Leader program/method, whose nationwide implementation is suggested in the final rural report (SOU, 2017:1), is part of this context.

Politically and policy-wise, local development work in rural areas has become defined from an economic perspective and interpreted in terms of growth and development. Some attention has been given to village actors as innovators of local democracy, for example, creating new, locally based forms of governance and collaborative models for dialogue between community inhabitants and municipalities (Olsson & Forsberg, 1997; SOU, 2012:30). However, these innovative forms of mobilizing and organizing community are no longer part of any public debate and are generally, I would think, little known at national, regional, and local decision-making levels. All in all, policies and programs advocate for a

business growth agenda rather than taking into account the deeper, more complex structural and existential perspectives of rural experiences and contexts.

Rural Movements Entrepreneurialized

Since 1995, as Sweden entered the European Union, voluntary work combined with European funding has been a commonly used model for rural community projects. I think it is accurate to say that projects have become *the* rural political strategy and development model. The overall European Union program structure with its economic growth policy sets a frame of reference for the funding of organizations at the national level as well as for village action at the local level. To obtain support and funding, local groups adapt to the European Union's framework, and the broad community perspective tends to yield to economical and entrepreneurial ventures (Forsberg, 2009, 2010). In this chapter, I demonstrate that as conformity (local development) takes the place of conflict (struggle for community), the political aims and claims of the early Swedish village movement and its local groups weaken. I look closely at the organizational institutionalization of the movement and affiliated initiatives that developed parallel to or in cooperation with the rural movement.

As mentioned above, in 1989, following the success of the village movement, a national body was formalized with the same name as the campaign slogan, "All of Sweden Shall Live!". In 2007, the national Popular Movement Council (*Folkrörelserådet Hela Sverige ska leva*) became a membership-based organization that is now called Rural Sweden. Rural Sweden still helps to raise the voices of rural inhabitants and to spread knowledge about rural issues to authorities and the political realm. As an organization, it is structured in several societal levels: national, regional, and municipal. It describes itself as "a national civil society organization for rural development," but more importantly, its 5100 registered local groups are emphasized as the "the oxygenation and bloodstream of our organization" (Hela Sverige, 2020).

From its beginnings, Rural Sweden has held national Rural Parliaments at varying rural locations every second year, with the aim to assemble

rural actors, strengthen a sense of rural fellowship, and put rural issues on the national political agenda. The organization has also formed rural programs with suggestions for rural development and politics. The overall goal and distinguishing feature in the latest rural program for 2018 is “balance between the rural and the urban.” Balance will be reached when there are equal possibilities for development in rural and urban areas. The program states a need to stop the centralization trend and the prioritization of cities, and it advocates for a new understanding of ruralness that does not spring from urban norms.

Hence, Rural Sweden has kept its role as a voice-giving organization with a vision of vibrant local communities all over Sweden and a broad perspective on both social and economic questions. However, the characteristics of a protest movement against the depopulation and dismantling of rural and sparsely populated areas have tapered. The radical political tone from the 1980s and 1990s, advocating for a new social order based on community decision-making at a fourth administrative level, has been diluted in favor of more consensus-like terminology. With the promotion of such concepts as growth, diversity, reconversion, and sustainability, the village movement now places itself in a rather uniform and standardized European development context (Forsberg, 2018).

Adjustments to the European entrepreneurial and consensus-oriented context reflect an organizational change that is especially evident when explored together with the change in affiliated women’s networks and neo-cooperatives (Forsberg, 2001). It is important to note here that neo-cooperatives and women’s networks came into prominence as significant actors in rural social mobilization during the early 1990s. They were present in urban areas as well, but in rural Sweden they offered new forms of engagement, community work, and entrepreneurship essential for the survival of the rural social economy. Special organizational structures with development advisors on the regional and local levels were formed within “All of Sweden Shall Live!” to support economic associations and women’s business initiatives—Coompanion and the National Resource Center for Women, respectively. These organizations were partly government-funded, built according to local requirements, and aimed at supporting community initiatives and empowering women. By 2000, there were some 100 regional and local resource centers throughout

Sweden (Hela Sverige, 2014) as well as cooperative advisory agencies in every region (later collectively named Coompanion).

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the neo-cooperative field diversified. With support from the national body, Coompanion, and its regional agencies, a shift of focus took place, moving from cooperatives as models for enterprising and community organizing in a broad sense to a primarily business-oriented form represented in approximately 300 branches of industry. The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth has been essential for the building and upholding of support structures for neo-cooperatives with coordinating bodies that still exist on national, regional, and partly municipal levels. For example, governmental funding enables Coompanion to give free counseling to groups that are interested in starting cooperatives. Coompanion helps to start 500 new cooperative businesses a year and supports local solutions for regional development.⁵ However, funding goes hand in hand with other developments. The holistic approach of the 1980s and 1990s, considering neo-coops as a means of empowering and strengthening local communities, has yielded somewhat to an economic approach with an entrepreneurial and economic growth agenda. In my analyses of a Coompanion project focusing on the cooperative model, counseling, and ideas in an entrepreneurial context, counselors gave voice to this particular change, asking themselves reflectively: “Where do we belong?” (Forsberg, 2011). The societal approach is most strongly reflected in the development of work-integrated social enterprises (WISE), with the goal of integrating people outside the labor market (Hedin et al., 2015).

The active position of women in community rural development has diminished with the increased focus on economy and growth. For example, the project period for the partially government-funded women’s resource centers ended during this time. When the project was prolonged, the decision was made to include the resource centers’ activities in the former NUTEK, a governmental agency focusing on growth. The focus shifted from a broad-based societal to an enterprising and growth approach that now operates under the name of Winnet, aiming for equal growth. A review of 30 years of gender equality work in the county of Jämtland, a pioneering region in terms of the development of women’s networks and resource centers, shows how women’s cooperative work

became a threat to power structures. As a result, the grassroots women's movement died out. Women's opposition in plans, practice, and networks, when it became too dangerous, was redefined, repositioned, and incorporated by power structures such as the economic growth model (Lundström & Lindgren, 2015).

The Future of the Rural Movement in Sweden

This chapter has described the development of the Swedish village movement as an evolution from a broad-based, holistic and politically challenging form of mobilization to a uniform, mainstream, and growth-oriented one. This development mirrors, to a large extent, the shift in governmental politics and funding with respect to the rural as Sweden entered the European Union.⁶ Although the degree of the Europeanization of civil society (Meeuwisse & Scaramuzzino, 2019) has been widely discussed, it has clearly penetrated both Swedish rural policies and the village movement as such. The perspective of the European Union on entrepreneurship and economic growth, adopted by the Swedish government, outmaneuvers the broader and more complex rural existential perspective expressed by and in the village movement. An economic outlook is accompanied by governmental expectations of civil society actors as a "local force," that is, voluntary work as a convenient and cheap solution to societal problems (Forsberg, 2010). This process of increasing governmental demands on voluntary actors has been strengthened by recent suggestions of contracting, also within a rural discourse (SOU, 2017).

As mentioned above, Halhead (2006) stressed the importance of European rural movements as special models that need recognition and support on their own terms. Official rural politics and the funding of the rural movement in Sweden from the 1980s until the present have not lived up to this need. In European comparison, the Swedish rural movement has experienced strong support from, and cooperation with, the government. While increasing its potential access to resources, this makes the movement vulnerable; when partnering with or adapting to governments in order to obtain funding and strengthen their advocacy roles,

movements potentially risk their independence as civil society actors (Reuter et al., 2012; Trägårdh, 2007). This is illustrated in the present case: the rural movement adjusted to the shift in policy and funding and thereby evolved, moving toward a less threatening entrepreneurial context in which political claims of rural issues and perspectives have been diluted. In addition, the slogan of Rural Sweden, “All of Sweden Shall Live!”, has been rephrased by researchers as “Can all of Sweden live?” (Edman & Lindvall, 2002) and “Shall all of Sweden live?” (Johansson, 2008). The rural, as a specific and challenging perspective to be considered at the national and European levels and advanced by rural movements, cannot be taken for granted. This development offers new insight into a question that social entrepreneurship researchers have raised before: are local actors innovative challengers or amenable followers (Gawell, 2013)?

Looking ahead, the experiences of invisibility and not being taken seriously expressed by rural inhabitants and local development groups (Forsberg, 2001, 2003, 2010, 2013) have of late been somewhat acknowledged in national political documents. This failing at the national level, as well as the requirement of a coherent politics for rural areas, was mentioned in Swedish Government Official Reports as early as the beginning of the twenty-first century (SOU, 2003:29): “Towards a new rural policy.” Furthermore, the title of the Rural Commission’s final report in 2006 can be interpreted as an appeal to render the rural more visible (SOU, 2006:101): “See the countryside!”. But it took ten years from that point to formulate a new final report for a coherent rural policy, presented by the parliamentary rural committee: “For Swedish rural districts—a coherent policy for work, sustainable growth and welfare” (SOU, 2017:1). The report recognizes that there is, thus far, no coherent policy for rural areas; it also states that people in rural areas contribute to building the society as a whole and are therefore entitled to good living conditions and equal opportunities. The rural policy of 2017 has the status of a directional and parliamentary decision; it has yet to be implemented.

However, political acknowledgments of rural neglect are still interpreted from an urban perspective, with elements of rural exoticism and narrowing down. Ruralness is valued in terms of production and for

Sweden as a whole: it is good for the development of businesses and industry because of its natural resources, cultural environment, and tourism. This was underlined at a press conference in March 2018 at which the Swedish prime minister presented the rural report. When asked if he considered urbanization to be a problem, he responded (Regeringen 2018):

If we don't seek to make politics conscious of possibilities for the whole country, this [the urbanization, author's comment] will escalate. I am totally convinced that we all want the rural to survive, not least as a place for urban citizens to visit and maybe relax. For this to occur, things have to work in rural areas. (author's translation)

The statement was disputed for its reference to rural areas principally as places for urban citizens to visit rather than as places valuable in themselves.

The making of the rural in contemporary Swedish national policy can be analyzed and discussed as an adaptation to urban norms (cf. Rönblom, 2014). Urbanization is surely another trend or tendency that can be added to the list of civil society transformations that require increased awareness. The Swedish rural campaign of the late 1980s, the mobilization of a village movement, the growth of rural community groups, and the formation of multi-level support systems have all played important roles in highlighting rural issues and eliciting hope for the future. It remains to be seen what the latest governmental rural policy will bring in terms of improving the balance between the rural and the urban, a theme also addressed by Rural Sweden and other rural movements in Europe.

Notes

1. The development groups are registered by the membership-based national organization Rural Sweden (www.helasverige.se), located in Stockholm. Many additional, non-registered groups also work for their communities, so in practice the number of groups is larger than the figure presented.
2. Surveys of the village movement were implemented at the end of the 1990s (Herlitz, 1998) and in the early 2000s (Forsberg, 2001). Follow-up

- studies are needed to obtain more and up-to-date facts about the situation for local development groups in rural communities as well as additional knowledge on the national organizational and regional levels.
3. Svågadalen has been a self-governing community since 1996. It holds a non-party political board within the municipality of Hudiksvall with members from the community elected on the basis of personal trust. Likewise, since 1998, the small communities of Kallbygden have an elected community board that deals with school-related and caregiving questions within the municipality of Åre. For more information on these indirectly elected boards, see SOU (2012, p. 30, pp. 200–201) or www.helasverige.se
 4. During the period 1991–2009, the Swedish National Rural Development Agency monitored issues of rural and sparsely populated areas. It also launched projects and programs to favor rural development, targeting, for example, women, youth, and community work.
 5. <https://svenskkooperation.se/goda-affarer/coompanion/> In addition to governmental funding, Coompanion receives financing from organizations, the public sector, consultant fees and benefits, and EU funding.
 6. Notably, in comparison to Rural Sweden, Coompanion and Winnet do not define themselves as movements.

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Part II

External Constraints and Facilitators of Resources



6

From Local to Digital and Back: E-Resourcefulness Among Urban Movements in Poland

Anna Domaradzka

Introduction

The speed and side effects of urbanizations result in the growing importance of social movements for urban democracy and quality of life. In this context, the relatively new phenomenon of urban movements has emerged all around Poland. The conceptual framework of the “right to the city” (Lefebvre, 1968) has migrated into Polish activists’ narrative and allowed for wide mobilization with a concept of “rights” as a new frame of meaning (Strang & Soule, 1998, p. 280). Polish activists are following the growing number of international actors promoting the idea of spatial justice and the “right to the city,” developing a dynamic urban social movement focusing on “concrete narratives” of residents’ needs as well as

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political postulates around more democratic city management (Mergler, 2008).

Describing strategies of networking, framing, and mobilizing support through virtual and symbolic means, this chapter explores the resourcefulness of these new civil society actors in their pursuit of novel forms of engagement with citizens and their attempts to influence public institutions. Here, urban movements are defined as associations, foundations, or informal grassroots organizations focused on representing the rights of urban residents vis-à-vis the local authorities and business actors that shape cities' development. The variety of actors in the urban arena, as well as the resources that they have at their disposal, are analyzed using the theoretical work on collective action (della Porta & Diani, 2009), movement networks (Diani & McAdam, 2003), autonomous spaces (Castells, 2013), and norm diffusion processes (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Strang & Soule, 1998). This study captures the complexity of processes occurring in contemporary urban civil societies concerning new forms of bottom-up mobilization, networking via information and communication technologies, and the professionalization and politicization of various forms of grassroots activities. The results also reflect changes in the perception of cities themselves as independent actors in political and economic processes and arenas of civil society development. The interest in this area of research is fostered by the growing importance of the civic sector in meeting the needs of urban residents and by a socio-political discussion around involvement in public life through neighborhood activities.

The analysis in this chapter is based on a historical overview of the last ten years of urban movement development in Poland. Data were gathered from documents, media statements, Internet ethnographies, observations, participatory observations, and individual interviews during the period 2011–2018. The research was conducted with respondents' full awareness, and preliminary results were presented during debates, discussion meetings, and informal conversations with local activists (see also Domaradzka, 2015a, 2017, 2019, 2021; Domaradzka & Wijkström, 2016, 2019). The chapter is structured as follows: First, a broader context of Polish civil society is outlined to introduce some of the main challenges and opportunities for urban grassroots activists as they engage with their urban

environment. Subsequently, an analysis of the development of Polish urban movements is embedded in the broader context of previous research on the issue of civil society and the theory of social mobilization.

Polish Civil Society

To understand the challenges that Polish urban social movements currently face, we must take into account both the historical–regional factors shaping the context in which they developed and the specificity of Polish society and culture. In a nutshell, the Polish civil society tradition is rooted in nineteenth-century charity work (often faith-based) and elite activism in the spheres of education, social support, culture, and sports. Specific forms of activism developed in rural areas around folk culture as well as farmers’ cooperatives and volunteer fire brigades. The development of a more widespread and democratic civil society structure was dramatically halted by the outbreak of the First World War and soon again by the Second World War, which left Poland brutally destroyed in both material and societal terms. The social elites (both urban and rural) were decimated due to war losses and planned extermination by both the Hitler and Stalin regimes, severely weakening the pre-war charity and social activism base.

Nevertheless, during the communist regime, various forms of civil society organizations existed, including associations that were accepted by the state (due to their approved ideological profiles) and informal or undercover forms of social activism creating an outlet for civic engagement and freedom of thought (what Kubik (1994) called “illegal civil society”). The 1989 breakthrough was, in part, the result of many years of this oppositional grassroots mobilization and one of the main motors of change at the beginning of the transformation of Polish civil society. More recently, however, Social Diagnosis data for the years 2003–2015 (Czapiński & Panek, 2015) suggested that participation in voluntary organizations in Poland has stagnated and that organizations have failed to attract new members. In the last ten years of research, the association participation indicator hovered between 12% and 15%. Additionally, only 15% of respondents were involved in any activities for the benefit of

Table 6.1 Active organization members and people active in local communities (municipalities, settlements, villages, neighborhoods) in Poland 2000–2015, %

	2000	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015
	–	12	12	15	13	15	14	13
Active in the community	8	13	14	14	16	16	15	15

Source: Czapiński and Panek (2015, p. 334)

the local community. As Table 6.1 shows, slow but systematic growth in community work involvement took place during the last decade, although this trend has slowed since 2013. As Makowski (2012) argues, in general, Poles tend to be reluctant to associate but are slightly more willing to support the activities of associations. However, that support is often occasional and prompted by a direct need or duty, for example, involvement in school social activities while one's child is a pupil, or ad hoc protests concerning local developments.

The greatest weakness of formally organized civic activism is, according to the NGO Sustainability Index (2011), the low level of skills related to financial and organizational issues. Only 7% of Polish civil society organizations are large entities with significant budgets, employing personnel, creating plans and strategies, and professionally organizing their work (Przewłocka et al., 2013, p. 10). At the opposite pole are organizations with low budgets, poorly managed and acting in an ad hoc manner; these constitute 35% of the Polish non-governmental sector (Stankiewicz & Seiler, 2013). The main challenges faced by all new civil society initiatives in Poland concern the lack of organizational culture and of available financial as well as human resources. The development of many civil initiatives (including watchdog organizations, cf. Jezierska, Chap. 2 in this volume) is reliant on external sources such as EU and other international funds. The majority of civic initiatives, however, must do without any public or external financial support; they depend on members' fees or private donations. As for human resources, the level of staff professionalization is low but increasing steadily due to training programs financed by government, EU, and international donors (cf. Chimiak, Chap. 9 in this volume).

While the majority of Poles are not engaged in any form of civic activism, there is a specific group of super-activists who engage in many

organizations at the same time, allowing for knowledge transfer between different organizations. This transfer, as well as that of other resources connected with know-how, is facilitated by highly developed civil society support structures based on umbrella organizations, such as Klon/Jawor, Boris, and Splot, which constantly incubate, support, connect, and study the sector. While the ongoing debate on the state of Polish civil society pays little attention to informal initiatives and their role in developing the culture of civic cooperation and strengthening social bonds (Mocek et al., 2014), we can observe dynamic recent development among the informal neighborhood initiatives around the country (Chądzyński, 2016). Many of these grow out of local protests, some subscribe directly to the “right to the city” movement (Pluciński, 2012), and others have emerged in response to the economic crisis and consumerist culture. Among those are food cooperatives, urban gardens, bartering collectives, and neighborhood associations (Domaradzka, 2018).

What remains characteristic for urban movements is that they also distance themselves from the general concept of the NGO. Urban grassroots activists often criticize formal organizations for becoming “zombies” (Michalski, 2015)—professionalized subcontractors of public institutions—and therefore lacking the independence and courage to act as watchdogs. While some decide to formalize as associations, foundations, or social cooperatives, many grassroots initiatives either see no need to formalize or believe that doing so could prevent them from achieving important social goals (Mocek et al., 2014). They often focus on creating good neighborly relations, influencing the decisions of the local government, or in some way resolving a pressing social issue that is not being addressed by state or market institutions. Urban initiatives often offer an opportunity to create lasting social ties and achieve a sense of belonging to a group of people with similar goals while also fostering a feeling of responsibility for the community.

The popularity of grassroots initiatives all over Poland proves the attractiveness of this form of participation, particularly when it involves neither bureaucracy nor long-term commitment (Mocek et al., 2014). This “soft” form of civic involvement, which characterizes contemporary social movements around the globe, appears to be an especially good fit for Polish society, whose different types of institutions are treated with

suspicion by default and whose citizens are still more focused on family values and economic stability than on wider social issues (Czapiński & Panek, 2015; Siemińska, 2002). Social activity in cities, implemented within both formal non-governmental organizations and informal residents' initiatives under the common slogan of the "right to the city" and the ideal of improving quality of life, features all of the hallmarks of the social movement. Moreover, it is a movement that combines actions at both a very local level (street, housing estate, or district) and a national one (in the form of networks of organizations and groups trying to represent generally understood interests of urban residents); at the same time, it fits into the broader global phenomenon of "right to the city" protest movements.

Urban Challenges at the Roots of Mobilization

Analyzing problems that currently occur in cities, many theorists conclude that the immanent feature of cities in developed capitalism is their crisis, manifested in the drastic deterioration of living conditions and causing a number of negative social and spatial phenomena (Castells, 1986; Florida, 2017). As Beauregard (1993) writes, the urban crisis includes deep physical and economic changes in post-war cities whose common denominator is loss—of jobs, importance, and income. This is compounded by broader demographic, social, and political problems such as poverty; aging; migration; racial, ethnic, and religious segregation; social pathologies; and disorganization. Rather than defining it as a crisis, I would argue that we are witnessing a new wave of challenges as cities sprawl uncontrollably; face problems integrating residents with diverse cultures, religions, and income and education levels; and, most of all, confront overburdening with regard to the costs of infrastructure and public service delivery. Therefore, the emergence of urban movements in their present form should be analyzed not only in the context of the ongoing processes of globalization, but above all in terms of the resulting new neoliberal models of urban governance and the dominance of investors' interests in the field of urban policy.

After the fall of communism, Poland followed the path of Western European countries, where the liberalization of the public sector triggered reactions from various parts of civil society. This mobilized already existing social movements on one hand and, on the other, stimulated the emergence of new forms of collective protests and actions. In cities, where the processes of globalization and economic development are particularly visible, liberal policies provoked special forms of protest generally referred to as urban movements (Andretta et al., 2015; Hamel, 2014; Mayer, 2007). During the 1990s, Poland's relative poverty created an investment vacuum that was quickly reversed by foreign companies enjoying many privileges and tax exemptions. Thus ensued an intensive yet unregulated spatial development that led to classic suburbanization processes, the deterioration of central city districts, and the general precedence of private investors' interests over residents' needs (Dorda, 2017; Kajdanek, 2012). This neoliberal fast track resulted in an urban policy gap promptly filled by new urban actors with origins in both commercial and civil society. While the developers' lobby focused on overcoming the legislative chaos and bureaucratic obstacles in investment processes, urban activists mobilized to counteract the processes of commercialization of public space and to protest against pro-market city management.

As a result of different forms of mobilization, the variety of urban initiatives in Poland now includes grassroots protest groups, organizations working for the benefit of the local community, residents' lobbying groups, and local anti-globalization movements (Domaradzka, 2018). Applying the slogan of spatial justice and the "right to the city" to the local terrain gave the activists a new conceptual framework and generated energy for joint action. In 2007, a new civil actor—the Urban Movements Congress—emerged, ready to build broad coalitions and professionalize the representation of interests with media know-how and organizational awareness. Congress activists were able to create a platform combining the political aspirations of the residents' organizations with the goals of a social services organization and the objectives of various social movements and civil society organizations, overcoming the geographical fragmentation of protests. Today, their actions combine the traditional repertoire of social movements with the new tactics of civil disobedience,

the use of social media and audiovisual communication in communities, and flexible forms of organization and protest (Mayer, 2007, p. 108).

Moreover, in contrast to the stagnating overall levels of civic participation (see Table 6.1), engagement in various types of meetings and actions regarding residents’ immediate environments has increased in recent decades (see Fig. 6.1). Residents’ meetings, discussions about the immediate surroundings, and meetings of housing cooperatives have all recorded an average increase of 10% during this period.

As modern cities lose their significance as industrial and production centers, real capital ceases to accumulate within their borders, and they become merely another source of global capital (Nawratek, 2012). The perceived helplessness of the municipality in the face of growing social problems has prompted residents to organize themselves in order to meet current needs and mitigate the effects of liberal urban policies. Increasingly, activities on the neighborhood or local level aim directly to articulate claims to the existing public space, co-creating it in accordance with the needs of local communities and improving the living conditions of the residents of a given area (Domaradzka, 2015a). There are many

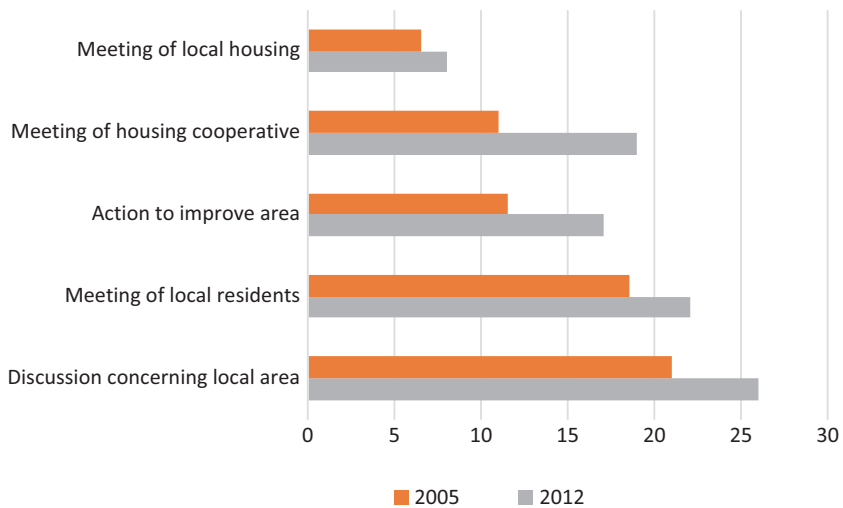


Fig. 6.1 Levels (%) of civic engagement of Poles, 2005 and 2012. (Source: Author’s calculations based on Polish World Values Survey database, Waves 5 and 6. Question: “In the last two years, have you participated in ... ?”)

indications that taking action on the immediate environment has opened the arena of civil society to new groups of citizens who had not previously been involved in social activities (Domaradzka & Wijkström, 2016; Mergler et al., 2013). Shortcomings in the area of civic education mean that local conflicts become a “school of citizenship” for some Poles, giving them a sense of agency that promotes long-term social involvement (Kowalewski, 2016). Polish cities constitute a specific context for social activities because of the density of inhabitants and the problems particular to urban areas as well as the historical and social conditions typical of post-communist countries. The conviction that only personal involvement can lead to the right solution in a given case is an important driving force behind the creation of grassroots movements. Generalized lack of trust, however, usually makes it difficult to build larger coalitions, especially cooperations between local authorities and groups of dissatisfied but active residents (Domaradzka, 2015b). For this reason, bottom-up initiatives in Poland are traditionally characterized by significant fragmentation and particularism (Chądzyński, 2016; Mocek et al., 2014).

As in the case of other social movements (e.g., women’s or ecological movements), urban movements have from the very beginning had the character of a multilevel network combining various forms of urban involvement. Over time, the diversity and complexity of this network has increased both in Poland and in other countries, and its composition has changed with the transition of some organizations from civil society to the field of public services or party politics. Despite its liquid form and multilevel character, the Polish urban movement as a loose network of organizations, initiatives, and individual actors now functions on the national level as well as in individual cities and local communities. With the Urban Movements Congress as their main organizational platform, Polish urban activists are also among the best organized in the world, along with those using similar platforms that have emerged in the United States (Right to the City Alliance) and Spain (PAH, Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca). To understand how this came to be, it is necessary to explore how these organizations generate, use, exchange, and transform different forms of resources.

Urban Movement Resources from the Perspective of Social Movement Theory

As aptly noted by della Porta & Diani (2009, p. 17), the condition for the transformation of dissatisfaction into action is the existence of certain material resources (such as work, money, or services) and non-material resources (authority, moral commitment, faith, or friendship). Mobilization results not only from tensions, but also from the capacity of social movements to capture dissatisfaction within the organizational framework, reduce operating costs, create and use solidarity networks, share benefits between members, and develop consensus between entities (*ibid.*). The nature of available resources translates into tactical choices and the influence of collective action on the social and political system (McAdam et al., 1996); the degree of opening or closing local political systems is also extremely important (Eisinger, 1973). In other words, the political situation may favor or block the creation of collective activities of an organized nature. The opening of the political system, while partly supported by the processes of democratization and pluralization of the public sphere, may also arise from the failure of the administrative system and its attempts to transfer certain of its competences to social partners. These factors were thoroughly analyzed by Tarrow (1989), who indicated the importance of several components: formal access to the political sphere, the level of stability of political alliances, the presence and position of potential allies, and the existence of social conflicts within and among elite groups.

In the case of Poland, the opening of the political system can be considered a result of cross-party conflict (with each party seeking to co-opt external allies in order to improve its own position), the strong influence of European Union policies and targeted funding streams (focusing on developing urban areas, but also fostering participatory processes and civic engagement), and a general welfare system crisis (with the outsourcing of social services to local organizations serving to disperse governmental responsibility and ease the burden). The relative success of Polish urban movements can thus be attributed not only to the resources and

adopted strategies of the country's activists, but also to the appearance of a gap in the usually rather hermetic political–bureaucratic apparatus. It is not without reason that Lech Mergler, commentator, activist, and co-creator of associations *My-Poznaniacy* (We, the Poznanians) and *Prawo do Miasta* (The right to the city), refers to “fracking” as a very effective long-term strategy, with urban activists entering the local councils and city offices one by one (L. Mergler, personal communication, October 1, 2015). It can be argued that this new opening (beginning in 2008/2009) resulted from the weakening of the positions of local and national political coalitions and from attempts to rebuild legitimacy through participatory activities. However, it is also an indication of the maturing of civil society structures in Poland and the growing know-how of local activists using their own and international experience.

In the Polish urban movement, we observe brokering practices and leadership based on a central position in the process of information exchange: a network node (della Porta & Diani, 2009, p. 159). A good example is the figure of the abovementioned Lech Mergler, who at the stage of establishing an urban movement in Poznań acted as a contact person connecting individuals and groups into a larger network opposing local plans for spatial development. Putting individual activists in touch with one another and supporting the exchange of experiences was of key importance to building a strong interest group. As a result, *My-Poznaniacy* association was established in 2007, gathering people operating in different neighborhoods and districts who had not previously known each other (Mergler, 2008; Mergler et al., 2013). This coming together would have been impossible without a database of telephone contacts and, later, e-mails collected and shared through the broker. His involvement made this scale shift (Diani & McAdam, 2003, p. 293) possible, allowing local activists to move from neighborhood-level activities to the citywide coalition that then played a focal role in organizing similar activities across Poland. The change of scale enabled the emergence of an extensive protest movement involving a wider group of actors, combining their postulates and identities into a larger whole (Diani & McAdam, 2003).

After the initial period of local self-organization, the further development of the urban movements network was made possible by means of Internet forums, where activists from different cities shared their

experiences and exchanged know-how gathered in the course of their local struggles. As similar confrontations were taking place in many Polish cities at the time, this exchange led to the emergence of an Internet-fueled network of local activists who quickly recognized their common goals. Through the intervention of internationally connected norm entrepreneurs (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998), the “right to the city” was adopted by Polish activists and soon became their common conceptual framework. Initially, the activists’ network met through the Internet forum where local groups came together to debate various topics, building a loose coalition around temporally and spatially limited issues. Later, a more permanent alliance was forged and sealed during a national gathering in Poznań in 2011. What was then called the Urban Movements Congress became an official label and a name for the national network. In 2017, after four national meetings (in 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2015), the Urban Movements Congress Federation was registered as a formal organization. The goal of this organizational platform is to support the wide network of local initiatives with know-how and official representation at the governmental level.

Over the years, the Urban Movements Congress has brought several changes to the narratives concerning urban policies, strengthening the mobilizing capacity of new initiatives but also influencing the strategies used by other actors in the urban field. Both local municipalities and private investors started to subscribe to the “right to the city” narrative, underlining the importance of residents’ needs and preferences and opening new spaces for consultations and participation around urban issues. Led and coordinated by the Congress’ umbrella construct, the local organizations in many Polish cities were able to successfully lobby for changes in local development plans as well as for the introduction of participatory budgets and public consultation mechanisms. At the same time, urban movements’ know-how and the Congress “brand” became an important political resource for activists running in local elections.

In *Spatial Anti-Helplessness Guide: Right to the City in Action* (Mergler et al., 2013), originating from the Poznań movement, the authors consider the policy of scale in this context. The emergence of new actors in the public sphere is, in their opinion, a consequence of the globalization of urbanization, that is, the transition from the local to the national and

then the global scale. As a result of this change, the local residents (whose protests the media initially described as a strictly local phenomenon) became social experts who, thanks to many years of engagement for the sake of their neighborhoods and cities, had gathered extensive knowledge of spatial processes.

The phases of urban movement development in Poland can likewise be described by means of categories proposed by Diani and McAdam (2003). The initial stage was connected with the presence of three important factors: (a) feelings of danger and frustration on the part of city residents who realized that they had no influence on spatial decisions in their immediate environments; (b) the emergence of a leader—a broker—who acted as a node of the network, creating connections between individual activists; and (c) external inspiration in the form of experiences brought from New York, Budapest, and Berlin by student activists acting as norm entrepreneurs. All three elements contributed to the gathering of people interested in the right to a city into one group. Thanks to the arranging of subsequent meetings of the Urban Movements Congress, the network of local organizations had the chance to achieve a kind of critical mass and become a significant force in local as well as national spatial policy. Through the first congresses, the movement also gained awareness of its scale and strength and transformed from the “movement in itself” to the “movement for itself,” in which the sense of solidarity and the community of interests is manifested by organized forms of struggle (Domaradzka, 2018, Pluciński, 2018). At this stage, the representatives of the movement began to negotiate goals and priorities that they considered to be shared, thus building a collective identity.

Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani (2009, p. 15), analyzing key moments for the crystallization of movements, conclude that “[t]he social movement arises when the feeling of dissatisfaction becomes widespread, and inflexible institutions cannot remedy this.” Particularly important in the context of urban movements are specific rhetoric, slogans, and metaphors as well as the emotions associated with them. Observing Urban Movements Congress meetings and online message exchanges allows us to see how solidarity between cities was built and a common identity and desirable emotions maintained. The analyses conducted in this chapter suggest that one of the factors conducive to cooperation in the network

of urban movements is a shared and constantly communicated ethos based on tolerance for different views and a pragmatic attitude toward solving rather than creating problems.

As McAdam (1982) pointed out, in order for circumstances to lead to an actual protest movement, “cognitive liberation” must occur: movement activists must believe that they have the power to make changes and must also define the system as being at fault for the existing situation. Analyzing the perceptions of activists in terms of agency, we find urban movement leaders indicating the importance of key events that gathered a larger group of urban activists, as well as successful protests, as having triggered their sense of agency (see also Mergler, 2008). The idea of overcoming obstacles as a learning experience and as fuel for further engagement is reflected in *Spatial Anti-Helplessness Guide* (Mergler et al., 2013), which uses examples of both successful and failed urban interventions to prove urban movements’ capacity to introduce change.

The collective feature of a social movement is a collective identity based on the awareness of common goals and a commitment to achieving them. This, in turn, allows various actors to define themselves as elements of a larger whole or as links connected with other organizations or individuals within a wider (often supranational) chain (network). As Melucci (1996) posited, building collective identity is conducive to uniting certain events into broader, shared narratives thanks to which movement actors perceive themselves as part of a larger process, a common history with which they can identify. In this case, the narrative was built upon the descriptions of different urban conflicts by organizations gathered around the Urban Movements Congress and the authors of *Spatial Anti-Helplessness Guide*.

The assignment of specific collective identities to particular movements is not tantamount to a claim of homogeneity of the actors involved in a given movement. It is, rather, the general goals that are shared and that become the basis for understanding beyond divisions. A good illustration of this issue is the concept of the “concrete narrative.” This concept, conceived by Mergler, represents urban activists’ focus on the real problems of a city’s residents and stands in opposition to strictly political activities that remain in the symbolic (non-concrete) sphere. The transition to the level of the specific problem enables people who differ on ideological matters to formulate common postulates and strategies. This

“community of interests,” moreover, usually turns out to be strong enough to enable cooperation across divisions. The use of a concrete narrative yields greater tolerance for differences of opinion as well as an attitude focused on the common good and on having an effect regardless of symbolic or ideological divisions. Following Ostrom (1990), I consider a concrete narrative to be a tool for constituting a community around a common good such as a public space, a building, or another element of urban life valuable to residents. Reflecting on the ability of the Polish urban movement to produce a concrete narrative, it is particularly important to recognize the role of increased online resources.

E-Resourcefulness—The Role of the Internet in Urban Mobilization

Nowadays, access to the public or political sphere entails technological competences and the ability to use the tools offered by the Internet, especially social media portals. During the last two decades, there has been a growing interest in digital forms of participation employing different Internet tools (Foth et al., 2015). This includes the relatively new phenomenon of participatory budgeting (Martela, 2013), based on e-voting on municipal budget allocation. Importantly, in participatory budgeting, the residents not only choose specific projects to implement but also prepare and promote them themselves. This allows residents to decide on the allocation of funds while also promoting involvement in the affairs of the local community (Martela, 2013). Creating a cooperation network has become much easier thanks to information and communications technology (ICT), and information management can thus be carried out on a regular basis. Furthermore, because political representatives and public administration increasingly use interactive Internet tools, the path to people directly responsible for the implementation of specific policies is shortening. Even if the activities that policymakers carry out on the Internet are focused on improving their own images, the very fact that they have begun to make use of virtual forms of communication generates another point of entry into the political system.

More importantly, in recent years, websites, blogs, and social media profiles have become a significant tool for managing the activities of neighborhood groups as well as wider networks of urban activists in Poland. It is through the Internet that residents obtain information, local activists try to mobilize their communities to act, and coordinators announce various types of local activities and events. On the grassroots level, the Internet helps to maintain relations between the involved neighbors and to build a common identity related to a given place. As the presented case study of the Urban Movements Congress illustrates, on the supra-local level, the role of the Internet as a networking tool is particularly crucial for knowledge sharing and the coordination of lobbying activities nationwide.

One of the main challenges in networking between geographically dispersed urban movements is physical distance. When opportunities for face-to-face interactions are scarce, processes of self-organization and trust-building can be difficult if not impossible to set in motion. However, the example of urban movements shows that, with the right mix of virtual and real interactions, a strong and effective activists' network can emerge and be sustained in the long term. This confirms Castells' (2013) identification of a new model of networked movements emerging around the globe. Such a multimodal form of activism, based on the use of the Internet and mobile devices, allows for coordinating activities in "free space" while rooted in the physical public space. According to Castells, the hybrid of cyberspace and urban space becomes a "space of autonomy" for networked social movements (Castells, 2013). Their decentralized structure provides broadened opportunities for participation, smooth reorganization, and dynamic responses to new obstacles.

In terms of the spatial dispersion of Polish urban movements, communication channels based on new technologies have proven to be key to movements' deliberative decision-making and information-sharing. The basic tools employed by urban activists are fanpages and closed groups on Facebook. The groups gather members of urban networks, including organizations, informal initiatives, and supporting individuals or institutions. Despite the importance of other, more traditional means of communication such as telephone calls and face-to-face meetings, the most frequent and intensive everyday communication takes place via the

Internet, with particular emphasis on social networking sites. Some documents are circulated via email or created in the cloud to allow for joint collaboration. Most of the activists referred to in this chapter combine regular strategic meetings with phone and Internet communication on urgent matters.

Urban movements' social media profiles serve a number of functions in communications with the external world: (1) sharing information about current activities; (2) posting invitations to organized events (meetings, protests, happenings, conferences, discussions, etc.); (3) organizing support for specific initiatives (through crowdfunding campaigns or petition-signing); (4) commenting on current issues concerning urban policies or local conflicts; (5) inspiring and moderating discussions on topics relevant to residents and cities; (6) educating residents about new trends in urban development; and (7) promoting engagement and civic attitudes by encouraging residents to become involved in different local activities (see also Sowada, 2018, 2019).

Citizen education and mobilization are often accomplished through sharing of media materials, infographics, videos, articles, interviews, memes, or cartoons. Facebook is the most commonly used communication platform among the urban movements, and individual organizations tend to manage several Facebook groups and fanpages focused on different projects or topics. Using posts within groups, participants may join a discussion at any time, read previous reviews, and add their own comments (Sowada, 2018). These functions make Facebook an extremely flexible communication tool with many layers of possible uses and levels of privacy/publicity. Facebook also allows participants to become engaged on a plug-in/plug-out basis without the expectation of constant engagement or physical presence (see also the concept of the "plug-in citizen" in Nawratek, 2008). This versatility helped the Urban Movements Congress during several stages of its development. Through different Facebook forums and mailing lists, the informal network of contacts and relationships could be maintained, even once the Congress became a formal organization. The exchange of ideas within Congress groups was thus not limited to close internal contacts: current issues, and especially the most important or controversial aspects of their operations, were discussed

through open Internet platforms that were accessible to supporting activists and non-affiliated organizations.

The Urban Movements Congress network is a good example of della Porta and Diani's (2009) thesis that, in the case of modern social initiatives, maximal effectiveness can be achieved by combining a bottom-up initiative with the communication possibilities offered by the Internet. Social movement groups operating in both the real and virtual worlds appear to have the highest recruitment effectiveness and to allow for long-term networking despite constraints related to geographical distance, time, or money. They are partially based on the previously built trust and pleasure that come from spending time together in the real world, but they also have mechanisms of virtually supported social control that sustain engagement. The mailing lists of the Urban Movements Congress and its social media fanpage exemplify such self-regulating forums, where strategies, priorities, and principles of inclusion and exclusion are discussed and implemented between bi-annual Congress meetings.

The activists communicate with each other on social media platforms to coordinate protests, keep track of each other, and spread the message of the "right to the city" and urban change. Cyberactivism springing from grievances about local problems or unwanted development have often led to more organized efforts to represent the needs of residents or improve the quality of the local environment; Internet outlets have been a successful tool for neighborhood mobilization because of their accessibility, which encourages people to start discussions and move toward common goals. In other words, resource mobilization applies to urban movements because (1) the websites themselves are an existing resource that is accessible to Internet users, which helps mobilize the goals of the organization, and (2) that mobilization is essential to urban movements' success. The fact that the people who founded the movements knew how to utilize the available technical resources, enabled others to easily access different forms of participation—whether sharing information on Facebook, taking part in an Internet forum discussion, or signing a petition.

While an urban movement is a geographically dispersed network of local organizations, the Internet is a perfect tool for upholding norms, organizing and sharing resources, and instrumentalizing a greater impact

on the national level (Grzechnik, 2019). Observing the trajectories of leading activists' engagement, we can see that their cyberactivism was crucial in terms of producing a common narrative for similar initiatives around the country. However, the shift from local to digital was not a unidirectional one: the narrative co-produced in the cybersphere has been continuously applied in the local context through concrete actions answering specific local needs.

At the time of this research, social media were the most frequently used networking tool, while at the initial stage of the movements' development, Internet forums around urban issues were more commonly accessed. Among social media outlets, Facebook maintains a dominant role, while Twitter and Instagram are less frequently used but also present in some activists' practice. Traditional websites and blogs are being used to a lesser extent and are updated less often. Webpages are diminishing in importance as primary channels of information transfer; in approximately 2011/2012, their function began to be taken over by public profiles on Facebook and other social media platforms. The main strengths of these platforms are that they allow interaction with a wider audience in real time and give activists an opportunity not only to broadcast, but also to receive feedback. Users of a given platform can express support or criticize posts and proposals in a way that resembles an e-voting mechanism (giving "likes" on Facebook or Instagram) and share their thoughts via comments. According to Sowada's (2018) respondents, the key advantage of this form of contact is that it facilitates decision-making and discussions.

Despite the popularity of social media profiles among activists, the reach generated by content published on social media and the intensity of online exchanges taking place there remain limited. Social media discussions usually concern the most controversial and current topics at a given moment, and the engagement of the audience is often temporary and based on ad hoc emotional reactions to a particular topic. The sheer quantity of posts on social media makes it difficult for users to remain visible to others, and a so-called scrolling culture hinders users' ability to spend significant time reading the posts and reflecting on the issue being considered. Additionally, social media users' demographics may limit a movement's capacity to reach a wider group of residents. This is especially

true of less digitally savvy members of the community. Some of the activists I interviewed mentioned that too much activism had moved to the Internet during the development of the urban movement, leading to “clicktivism” and leaving little time for real contacts with other residents and face-to-face meetings (Mencwel, 2012).

While no form of remote communication can replace face-to-face meetings and conversations, Internet tools and resources have become an indispensable tool for urban activists over the years. However, it seems that knowledge about the movements among the general public is most often generated by traditional media such as local newspapers (and their Internet editions) and radio (as well as TV, to a much lesser extent). Residents’ knowledge about local organizations is also shaped by personal meetings with activists, observing activists’ activities in public spaces (such as happenings, posterings, or protests), and by their own participation in organized events (including neighborhood festivals, residents’ meetings, and consultations). While most residents remain unengaged or express their support by giving virtual “likes,” the presence of urban movements in e-communication channels allows for ad hoc grassroots commitment. When asked for help in a specific situation or support in a single action, the virtual community of urban movement supporters has the capacity to transform digitally mediated relations into tangible outcomes.

Conclusions

In an analysis of the situation of Polish civil society, Makowski (2012) pessimistically labeled it an “empty shell” consisting of organizations that fail to root themselves in an active society and that enjoy neither social trust nor financial stability. This assessment appears to be partly upheld by mainstream quantitative data, especially in international comparison. However, I would argue that we have seen some new “collective effervescence” (Kearney, 2019) among civil society groups in the last few years, mainly in the form of new urban movements and other local groups taking responsibility for making Polish cities and villages better places to live. In addition, the number of people who believe that they can

influence their environment and help those in need by working with other people appears to be growing. According to World Values Survey data, between 2005 and 2012 the percentage of “altruistic optimists”—those who believe in their capabilities to work with other people in order to help the needy or change their environment and also think that it is important to be sensitive and help others—increased from 40 to 46%. At the same time, the percentage of “egoistic optimists”—who believe in their capabilities to change the environment or help the needy, but also declare that it is important to focus on their own lives first—grew even more, from 11 to 19% (Domaradzka, 2014).

In this context, the basic dilemmas facing urban movements as they continue to develop are connected with the existing narrative concerning civil society and social capital. The activity of urban movements remains in the sphere of civil society, which, as proven by the previous processes of co-opting, can become a tool for maintaining the existing order and for filling gaps in market and state activities. Participation in urban movements alone can help to relieve frustration and weaken political postulates, but organizations themselves can become co-creators of the social compromise, or “producers of consent” (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Implementation of some postulates of the movement may contribute to acceptance of half-solutions and encourage compromises; for example, the success of tenants’ organizations may promote gentrification. In addition, the co-opting of urban movements by political groups and processes of loss of legitimacy (see Hamel, 1991; Uitermark, 2004) are becoming increasingly recurrent topics.

These smaller failures do not seem to have influenced the development of the urban movement, which remains a recognized civil society actor in the Polish urban policy field. What was once a field organized around two dominant logics—the logic of profit, represented by private capital and the global economy, and bureaucratic logic, represented by local administration and focused on procedures and ensuring the status quo—is now changing into a more diverse arena of struggle. The right to the city invoked by activists questions both logics: it demands the restoration of residents’ impact on the political and spatial processes that shape their everyday lives, thereby cultivating not only their quality of life, but also their sense of social dignity and political subjectivity. The most important

influence that Polish urban movements have had thus far concerns the narratives and norms guiding urban policies and urban development in Poland. As Kubicki (2016) remarked, the development of the autonomous sphere of the Internet has opened up opportunities for shaping new, alternative urban narratives which, over time and thanks to the symbolic resources of activists, have begun to penetrate to the main discourse.

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7

Between Autonomy and Compliance: The Organizational Development of Russian Civil Society

Vsevolod Bederson and Andrei Semenov

Introduction

Civil society in Russia has undergone substantial transformation in the post-Soviet period. It has closely followed the development of the political regime: in the 1990s, the rapid growth of the sector was due to the country's political opening and the influx of international funding; in the 2000s, the regime took an authoritarian path and increased its control over civil society. After the “For Fair Elections!” campaign of 2011–2012, the Kremlin turned to a more restrictive policy and imposed coercive legislation in a number of arenas of public life. Simultaneously, the state increased the amount of public funding available through grants and subsidies (cf. Fröhlich and Skokova, Chap. 3 in this volume). In this “dual reality” (Salamon et al., 2015), Russian civil society was forced to choose between retaining autonomy and complying with the regime in exchange for resources.

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Resources matter for organizational development. They are essential in delivering on organizational purposes, maintaining linkages with constituents, and planning further development. In this chapter, we argue that by regulating resource flows and access to them, the Russian state divided the population of civil society organizations into niches in order to induce compliance. The process started in 2006 with substantial changes in the law “On nonprofit organizations” and continued into the 2010s. In 2012, Law No. 121-FZ “On amendments to specific legal acts...”¹ introduced the category of “foreign agents”—civil society organizations with foreign funding used for “political purposes” (see Kravchenko et al., Chap. 1 in this volume for a detailed note). In 2015, legislation on “undesirable organizations” prohibited the operations of several international donors, further aggravating funding shortages in civil society organizations. These laws, alongside other measures to control resource flows, triggered a process of organizational adaptation across Russian civil society.

Through media analysis, official statistics, and interviews with representatives of 17 civil society organizations from ten Russian regions, we examine how the abovementioned legislative changes have shaped organizational development. We argue that for the most vulnerable parts of civil society, that is, those perceived as a threat to the regime and reliant on international funding—organizations working with human rights as well as environmental and electoral watchdog organizations—the choice was essentially one between liquidation and deinstitutionalization, which implied a dramatic decrease in the scale of operations. Nevertheless, civil society organizations with access to more substantial resources were also able to engage in institutional resistance. The legislative changes altered the organizational dynamics of other types of organizations as well, mainly with regard to compliance with state-induced organizational routines and agendas. In short, the organizational dynamics of a particular civil society organization were largely shaped by its position in the field, determined by the availability of resource flows and the rules of access to them. We begin by clarifying our theoretical approach and then proceed to draft a trajectory of Russia’s development as it pertains to the topic of the chapter. Subsequently, we analyze the organizational dynamics of selected civil society organizations and their responses to the legislative changes and, finally, offer our conclusions.

Organizational Theory and Trajectories of Organizational Adaptation

In organizational theory, sources of change are considered attributable either to actors inside the collective establishment (rational theory of organizations) or to environmental factors (theories of open systems, resource dependence, and institutionalism). The latter group of theories draws attention to the fact that organizations are not autonomous units with boundaries impervious to the environment. In fact, every organization actively interacts with its context and adapts to its constraints (Aldrich, 2008; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Most importantly for this study, “the environment affects organizations through the provision and (or) retention of resources”; consequently, organizational forms can be ranked “in terms of effectiveness of the procurement of resources” (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003, p. 61). In short, resources affect key aspects of the organizations such as budget, number and quality of staff, scope and scale of operations, and material endowment.

Ecological organizational theories posit the existence of separate “niches” that are created around resource flows as relatively autonomous subfields (Hannan et al., 2003; Hannan & Freeman, 2013; Radaev, 2005; Valitova & Tambovtsev, 2005). These niches can be described analytically along two dimensions—the volume of available resources and the rules of access to those resources. The latter dimension is important because the resource flows are not readily accessible to the organizations; rather, access is regulated by means of legal and institutional frameworks established by the state. The first dimension can be simplified by dividing the niches into the resource-poor and the resource-rich. The resource-poor category encompasses subfields in which few institutional donors or alternative sources such as crowdfunding are available—for any reason. It might be, for example, that donors do not recognize the importance of a particular agenda or that the state restricts activity in the relevant area. Resource-rich niches feature an abundance and a diversity of resource flows available for civil society organizations. Figure 7.1 maps several examples of Russian civil society organizations onto this scheme.

The niche represented in the bottom right-hand corner of Fig. 7.1 (resource-poor and with unrestricted access) is typically populated by small-scale grassroots initiatives (e.g. local initiatives to protect urban commons and charitable initiatives). Small grants and state subsidies, crowdfunding, and volunteers are the primary resources available to such organizations. Managed by amateur activists, these initiatives have some proto-organizational features such as regular meetings and distinct decision-making processes, but they avoid obtaining legal status. Since grassroots initiatives are rarely formally incorporated, the state does not have significant leverage over their development (see Lukinmaa, Chap. 13 in this volume for a detailed analysis of LGBTQI+ activism as an example of this argument). Organizations from the opposite niche have a large volume of potential resources available (e.g. from international donors), but with access restricted, they constantly risk being cut off from the resource flows. The circumstances of civil society organizations under the “foreign agents” law illustrate this point: multiple Russian human rights, environmental, and advocacy groups that once had steady funding

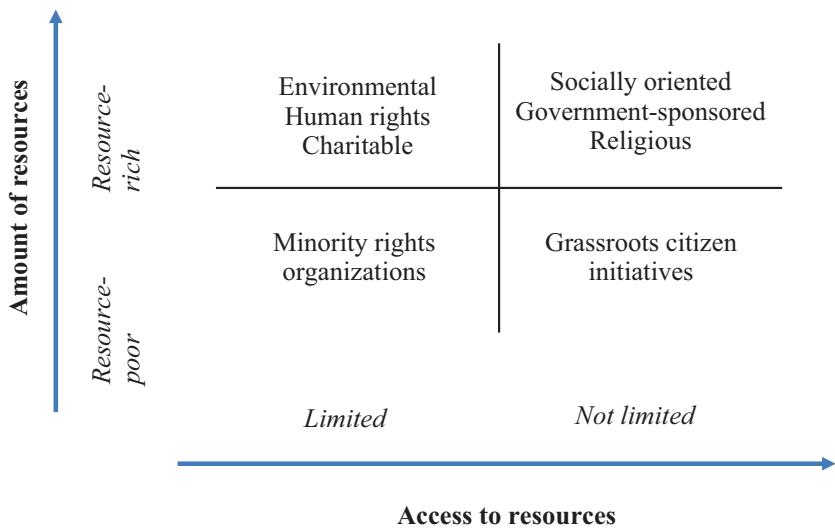


Fig. 7.1 Classification of organizations by volume of resources and rules of access

from international donors experienced shortages after the imposition of the law.

The upper right-hand corner of Fig. 7.1 represents a situation in which restrictions are few and resources are plentiful. State-sponsored and socially oriented civil society organizations populate this niche and have no incentive to change as long as they have access to funds. In the resource-poor niche with restricted access, organizations working with or on behalf of minority rights groups have the most difficult experience: they initially had much smaller resource endowments and have struggled with the “foreign agents” law. As a result, deinstitutionalization in the form of a reduction in the scope of activity and outright termination are the most likely outcomes for such organizations. In short, we expect civil society organizations’ reactions to the legislative changes to be conditioned by the niches they occupy. However, we do not claim that specific sets of strategies are niche-specific. The civil society organizations are not isolated from each other; therefore, throughout our analysis, we also explore the diffusion of norms and practices as well as informational exchange as mechanisms that contribute to the crafting of adaptation strategies.

Political Changes in Russia and Organizational Development in Civil Society

In the three decades following the collapse of the Soviet Union, civil society organizations’ resource flows and access to resources changed significantly. During the 1990s, thanks to permissive legislation and international funding, civil society in Russia exploded with newly formed organizations. The unique situation of the 1990s produced an organizational field that was dominated by professional, foreign-funded civil society organizations with limited societal and spatial outreach (Evans et al., 2006). The *laissez-faire* approach, however, came to an end after the string of “color revolutions” in the post-Soviet countries. The Kremlin’s growing concern that civil society was aligning with the opposition led to the first wave of restrictions in the sector in 2005–2006, including the introduction of the

bill that enforced more stringent reporting standards for non-governmental organizations in November 2005. As a representative of “United Russia”—a political party that has dominated the political process since 2003—stated, its goal was to “accurately register the possibility of foreign state influence on these [civil society] organizations” (Yandex.ru, 2006).

The determination of the proponents of tighter regulation of civil society was fueled by the “spy stone scandal,” framed as attempted foreign interference into internal affairs (RBK, 2012). The scandal resonated with public opinion: according to a survey by ROMIR, 67% of Russians supported the law. The respondents reasoned that “patrons [of civil society organizations] often pursue their own political goals; tax compliance is not always evident” (Lenta.ru, 2006). In the state-controlled media, a campaign was launched linking the presence of foreign intelligence services and the activities of civil society organizations, which received foreign funding and purportedly sought to change traditional Russian values (Yablokov, 2020). Consequently, the political elites and the citizenry agreed that civil society was dangerous for the political regime and should thus be controlled. Member of Parliament Andrei Makarov (United Russia) was particularly outspoken on this issue, stating during the third reading of the bill that “the activity of nonprofit and social organizations [...], of course, will always be connected with politics” (Yandex.ru, 2006).

The major consequence of the 2006 bill was a dramatic increase in the organizational burden for civil society organizations. The stringent reporting rules—and the threat of fines—entailed the redistribution of their limited financial resources to legal and accounting professionals. In addition, registering and adopting organizational charter changes became more cumbersome. Finally, the state inspections by the Federal Registration Service became more frequent and could be initiated at will rather than on schedule, which placed the civil society organizations under additional duress as the inspectors were usually unfamiliar with the field. The inspections also bred corruption and red taping (Socpolitika.ru., 2007).

A direct consequence of the 2006 law for civil society was the reduction of funding from foreign donors. Some large institutional donors, such as the Ford Foundation, the United States Agency for International

Development (USAID), the Matra Program of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Mott Foundation, halted their operations in the country completely. Others, including the MacArthur Foundation, significantly reduced their scope. The withdrawal of major donors decimated the sector: according to the Russian Civic Chamber, the number of civil society organizations registered by the Ministry of Justice plummeted from 400,000 in 2012 to 219,000 in 2018. Although a large number of the liquidated organizations were only “organizations on paper,” it is difficult to estimate their share.² Many organizations continued their activities as informal associations (Vandysheva, 2014). In short, resource depletion and the restrictive legislation described above, which Robertson (2009) called the “licensing” strategy, forced Russian civil society organizations to adapt to new environmental constraints.

The new regulations “tightening the screws” on civil society organizations came after the 2011–2012 campaign “For Fair Elections!,” which challenged the results of the parliamentary elections and Putin’s return to the presidency. The regime’s reaction to the mobilization was manifold: it cracked down on the movement, prosecuted participants, and twisted the “liberalization” package proposed by Medvedev in December 2011, which had promised a return to direct regional gubernatorial elections and a substantial easing of restrictions on the formation of political parties. More importantly for civil society organizations, the abovementioned Law No. 121-FZ “On amendments to specific legal acts...” was rapidly enforced. The law stipulated that any organization receiving funding from abroad and “conduct[ing] political activity” would be considered to be “performing the functions of a foreign agent.” The lack of a clear definition of the term “political activity” enabled the authorities to arbitrarily apply it to almost any action: seminars, roundtable discussions, the appearance of expert opinions and interviews in the media, and even providing the government with required information could fall into this category.³ The ensuing struggle to more narrowly define the phrase, which included amendments proposed by the Committee of Civil Initiatives, the NGO Lawyers’ Club, and regional ombudsmen, eventually failed. In 2016, new amendments to the law “On nonprofit organizations” consolidated the existing judicial practice of broadly interpreting the concept (Gordeeva, 2016).

The law on “foreign agents” considerably increased bureaucratic burdens for civil society organizations on the list as well as those under threat of being added to it: such civil society organizations are required to submit detailed reports on their activities to the Ministry of Justice twice annually. They face mandatory financial audits (this requirement had previously applied only to foundations) and occasional random checks by the Ministry of Justice. In addition, these organizations must label all of their products with a statement that the organization is listed as a “foreign agent.” In 2016, after almost three years of existence, the list contained 96 organizations; 17 had previously been removed from the list, and 25 had been liquidated.⁴ At the moment of preparing this chapter, there were 70 organizations on the list. As Table 7.1 shows, the largest proportion of listed organizations focus on the promotion of human rights (32%), which indicates that the regime is more likely to interpret the work of organizations in this area as “political.” However, the ministry also placed other types of civil society organizations, such as charity foundations and resource centers, on the list.

Parallel to the tightening of the regulations, serious changes in resource flow took place. In 2015, the State Duma adopted a law on so-called “undesirable organizations,” forbidding international organizations seen as a threat to national security to fund domestic civil society organizations. Specifically, the General Prosecutor’s office, in coordination with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, can deem any commercial or nonprofit organization “undesirable,” even in the absence of a court ruling. The first organizations to appear on the list were the U.S.-based National

Table 7.1 Share of NGOs listed as “foreign agents” by the Russian Ministry of Justice (30 March 2020), % of total

Human rights	31.9
Environmental	2.9
Analytics	7.2
Resource centers	14.5
Mass media	10.1
Charitable	11.6
Democracy/elections	2.9
Other	18.8

Source: Ministry of Justice website, <http://unro.minjust.ru/NKOForeignAgent.aspx>. Authors’ calculations.

Endowment for Democracy, Soros' Open Society Foundation, and the International Republican Institute. These organizations formerly sponsored human rights networks, research, and educational organizations. The combination of the law on "foreign agents" and the law on "undesirable organizations" therefore cut off or severely restricted access to previously available resource flows.

In sum, the legislative changes that took place between 2006 and 2015 restricted access to resource flows previously available to civil society organizations, effectively reducing funding from independent sources, and tightened the rules of access to remaining resources. They also substantially increased transaction costs for organizational activities. These environmental shifts divided civil society into those with preferential access to public funding (organizations that populated the resource-rich niche without restrictions on access) and those with limited access. Existing civil society organizations and groups aspiring to formal status were also forced to adjust their organizational development strategies.

Organizational Trajectories Before the Law on "Foreign Agents"

The changes in legislation after 2012 amplified already existing divisions in the third sector. To assess the impact of the legislative changes on the organizational dynamics in the field, we conducted 19 interviews with representatives of 17 civil society organizations and informal initiatives in the winter and spring of 2015. We selected the organizations to reflect a diversity of parameters that might further elucidate the links between environmental conditions and organizational responses. Hence, we surveyed organizations in Irkutsk, Izhevsk, Kaliningrad, Kirov, Krasnodar, Moscow, Perm, Petrozavodsk, St. Petersburg, and Tyumen. The organizations also differed in terms of length of time in operation, sector, and degree of institutionalization.⁵ The sample included three charitable organizations, three human rights organizations, one environmental organization, four social and minority rights organizations, four think tanks or resource centers, two local community foundations, and one

civic initiative. At the time of data collection, nine of the organizations were classified as “foreign agents,” two had been removed from the list, and three organizations had ceased to exist. Interviews were conducted with heads (or, in two cases, with deputy heads) of organizations. We asked the informants about the origins and current state of their organizations, the impact of the legislative changes, and their strategies for coping with their current challenges.

Changes in resource flows and the rules of access formed the starting point of our analysis. At the time of the interviews, the organizations were at different stages of development, and their representatives openly stressed the contradiction between the need for professionalization on one hand and the environmental constraints (resources and the “costs of doing business”) on the other. This reasoning was especially pronounced among the respondents from younger organizations. The majority of the informants talked about a “natural” organizational path from informal volunteer communities or “grassroots” initiatives to professional, often expert, civil society organizations. They noted that, initially, their organizations had existed as informal communities of mutual assistance and situational joint actions, but had gradually become professional as manifested in the recruitment of full-time specialists (lawyers, accountants, psychologists, and other professionals, depending on the type of civil society organizations). The acquisition of office space and a permanent secretariat for consultations and reception, alongside an external “certification” by public authorities, were further indicators of professionalization. An informant working for the organization supporting families with children with disabilities noted that it began with a “community of activist parents”; then, a legal entity was formed and a full-time lawyer was hired. Later, they began to “participate in or organize platforms with representatives of parents and authorities” (Respondent G).

The idea of a “natural pathway” from an initiative to a professional organization was widely shared among our informants, regardless of their organizational niches. A representative of a public educational organization in operation since 1999 described the trajectory as follows:

Initially, the organization was created as an interest club: childhood friends created it, graduated from different universities in different cities, came

back to their [home town], gathered to interact, spend leisure time together. After one or two years, the organization became socially oriented, professionally engaged in advocacy. (Respondent D)

For others, professionalization was an aim from inception. A representative of a local community foundation in existence since 1999 and with significant experience in international projects contended that, from the very start, “we immediately placed a stake on the professional approach” (Respondent B). Informants viewed professionalization as entailing division of labor, work with multiple sources of funding, and engagement with project activities on a permanent basis. Failure to develop such practices was considered an impediment to organizational development. For example, the head of a small resource center operating since 2002 stated that, in connection with a lack of resources and, to some extent, the reluctance to expand, “in many ways [employees] have to be universal: this does not allow for the development of specialization, professionalism” (Respondent R).

Professionalization was a challenge for the organizations in resource-poor niches. A representative of a grassroots initiative noted that after the first successful projects of the group, the members of the community faced the question of the organization’s future:

Arguments arose repeatedly about whether it was worth it to register the organization. But the organization imposes obligations on us that are too heavy for such an association, and the benefits that we will receive are not obvious. (Respondent K)

The group decided not to form a legal entity, which meant that it had no organizational, administrative, or financial dependence on the government; in exchange for considerable independence, however, it ran a high risk of instability and inconsistent resource flows for its activities. As a result, the initiative dissolved two years later (2012–2014).

Organizations from the low-resource niche with limited access (three of the organizations in our sample) combined elements of professional organizations from the resource-rich niche with the characteristics of informal initiatives. They needed legal status in order to obtain stable

funding. One example is that of an organization for the protection of minority rights that was created in 2009. Its peculiarity was that it was a branch of an all-Russian organization that decided to decentralize in response to increasing political risks. The manager of this organization noted the importance of resources for improving the quality of work: the funding influx made it possible to employ staff specialists. However, the allocation of the funds only once a year created uncertainty. Volunteers provided a great deal of help with events, but the money supply remained short (Respondent B2).

Informants almost universally shared the view that funding constitutes a key condition for organizational development. This can be a problem even for civil society organizations in the resource-rich niche; a representative of an environmental organization dating back to the 1990s noted:

It was a time when one hundred people in the staff worked on projects, and that was at the end of the 1990s [...] gradually the activities shrank, in part due to a lack of funding. (Respondent V)

Over the five years prior to the interview, the organization had experienced serious financial problems; the “foreign agents” law and inspections sealed its fate, and the organization ceased to exist. Similarly, another civil society organization for environmental protection was unable to continue its activities, and its manager noted that the problems arose even before it was classified as a “foreign agent”:

The organization most likely came to this [desperate state of affairs] on its own: there was no generational replacement of staff, there was some stagnation, a certain sign [that it had exhausted its resources]. It needed to close and open anew. (Respondent C)

The theme of resources and the narrowing or expanding of access to them represented one of the central points of all of the interviews, even in cases in which the respondents were not specifically asked to talk about it.

The respondents also confirmed the increasing share of state funding in the past few years. For some, this had created additional opportunities

(presidential grants allowed one of the young, low-resource initiatives to establish a web presence and release printed products, and another organization obtained a vehicle for volunteers), while others saw danger in the expansion of the government's presence. A resource center representative gave the following assessment of this process:

There is a large flow of government money—presidential grants, grants and subsidies from the Ministry of Economic Development, partner projects with other regions, interregional. I see a certain danger in this, this needle, dependence on government financing. Habituating oneself to certain sources of financing, you wean yourself off of others and stop focusing on them. The government, step by step, has new requirements, new laws, focuses, and priorities. (Respondent T)

At the same time, the strengthening of government regulation was one of the factors that pushed civil society organizations to professionalization, given that the handling of governmental money required the employment of lawyers and accountants. Moreover, many informants indicated that the government better understood how to interact with formal, bureaucratic structures than with informal activist communities. Similar effects were observed with the presence of international donors, but state influence on organizational trajectories was clearly greater. On one hand, the strengthening of regulations and the changes in resource flows led to the diversion of a bulk of activities to reporting and related activities; on the other hand, some respondents noted the push for regional authorities to work more closely with civil society.

The Impact of the “Foreign Agents” Law on Organizational Development

How did the imposition of the “foreign agents” law affect the development of civil society organizations across all niches? For one thing, the organizations directly targeted by the law faced dire consequences. In February 2016, the Supreme Court of Tatarstan, following the initiative of the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, liquidated the

Association of Human Rights Advocates Agora. After receiving notification of the forthcoming 2015–2016 inspections, Agora had submitted an application to the Ministry of Justice to add it to the “foreign agent” list, thereby trying to avoid a significant monetary fine for purportedly breaking the law. This step would not necessarily prevent the Ministry of Justice from charging a fine, since the latter could invoke the violation for the period before the organization joined the register. Alongside Agora, about a dozen organizations attempted to be added to the list in order to avoid fines. In addition, some civil society organizations received offers from supervisory agencies to voluntarily join the list in order to avoid fines and litigation from the Ministry of Justice (Klub iuristov tret’ego sektora, 2016). In other words, from its inception, the law had a political and an administrative logic: the former aimed at quelling the dissenters and the latter at delivering numbers to the federal ministry.

Curiously, the original version of the law was directly related to the activities of religious organizations, which included all of the parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church and Muslim communities. After the intervention of religious representatives, religious organizations were exempted from the “foreign agents” law. However, a special law was later adopted that allowed the state, represented by the Ministry of Justice, to control the financial flows and activities of religious organizations. Experts noted that this was done not to control the Russian Orthodox Church but rather, in the interest of the Russian Orthodox Church, to fragment this nonprofit field and control the Protestant and Catholic communities (Rustamova & Bocharova, 2015).

In addition to imposing fines, the law on “foreign agents” included measures such as eviction from office spaces, seizure of assets, prosecution, planned and unscheduled inspections, liquidation of organizations, accusations of undermining the constitutional order, and rejections of requests to be excluded from the list. A number of these measures have been analyzed in academic works (Flikke, 2016; Vandysheva, 2014). Based on our interviews and analysis of secondary data, we can identify three key categories of regime pressure on civil society organizations under the law on “foreign agents.”

The first type of pressure involves fines and other measures of financial pressure. As previously noted, the “foreign agents” law invokes significant

monetary fines for the violation of a provision of this law. Through the court, the Ministry of Justice can impose a fine on a legal entity (civil society organization) as well as on an individual (the manager of the organization). Our respondents noted that this type of pressure represents a substantial financial burden: the typical fine of 300,000–500,000 rubles is sizeable for the budget of any Russian civil society organization, corresponding in extreme cases to one-third or even half of annual spending. The risk of receiving a penalty places the problem of financial policy optimization before a civil society organization, especially taking into account that, as a rule, its budget is a set of grants or subsidies. All expenses related to these are included in a particular budget that requires a report to the donor. In other words, civil society organizations do not have money available for paying fines. Exceptions are those organizations that, in addition to engaging in grant activities, provide commercial services.

The second type of pressure encompasses various inspections by the Ministry of Justice, prosecutors, and other agencies. The majority of respondents referred to planned or unscheduled inspections from supervisory bodies as one of the most difficult measures with which they were forced to cope. The organizations' managers stressed that they were obliged to spend considerable human and time resources on preparations for the inspections and subsequent corrective actions (*ustranenie nedostatkov*). These measures "often distract the workers from the basic activities of the organization, making them focus on cases related to verification" (Respondent R). In addition, a large number of organizations noted that they had been added to the register as a result of an "unexpected" inspection; a respondent from one organization said that it was included in the register in connection with the need "to execute the plan for foreign agents in the region" (Respondent B).

Stigmatization and public information pressure constitute the third type of pressure exerted under the law. Representatives of several civil society organizations in Perm that were threatened with inclusion in the register wrote that "for our organizations to be called foreign agents is an offensive lie" (7x7 Journal, 2013). The foundation Public Verdict published a statement after inclusion in the register in which it indicated:

The imposition of a foreign agent label on us is designed to ensure that we will not have the support of our fellow citizens and will not be able to continue to protect their right not to be subjected to arbitrary action by law enforcement agencies. (Obschestvennyi control, 2014)

Others, like the Levada Center, an independent pollster, also issued a statement of disagreement and attached it to every publication. The reputational impact of labeling the organizations as “foreign agents” reverberated across the niches. Our respondents noted increased distrust within the sector as well as in relations with public officials. Even organizations left untouched by the law confessed: “Then came the ‘foreign agents;’ we were told that once we received foreign funding, they [the bureaucrats] began to fear [dealing with] us, to treat us with caution” (Respondent B).

In exceptional cases, accumulated symbolic capital was able to compensate for reputational loss. For example, a representative of an organization included in the list noted in an interview:

Everyone understood, made peace, we are still invited to some kinds of round-table events [...]. Not everyone, of course, but those with whom we worked earlier understand the absurdness of this situation. (Respondent D)

The inductive typology of the organizational responses (Fig. 7.2) is based on the interviews conducted and the analysis of secondary sources. These responses have been mapped onto the initial schematic for organizational niches (Fig. 7.1). We explore each strategy below.

The *under-the-radar* strategy is manifested in organizations that do not fall under the category of “foreign agent” (due to a lack of foreign funding at the moment of interview and at the time of inspections) as well as by the representatives of informal initiative groups. In the interviews, respondents from these organizations noted that their positions were rather unstable and that their status could easily change at any time upon receipt of foreign funding. They also mentioned that their positions were dependent on the goodwill of regional powers (Respondents G2, T, M). On an organizational level, they could not withstand change and had to forfeit further steps toward professionalization.

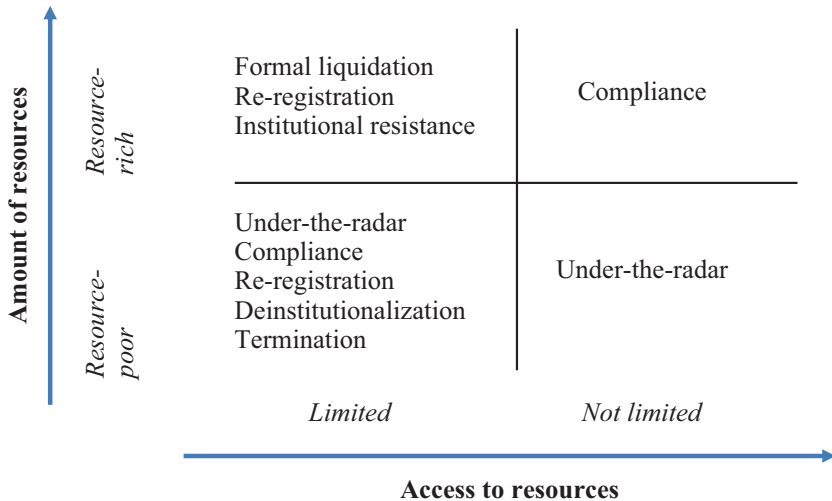


Fig. 7.2 Organizational responses

Termination refers to a complete cessation of all activities, entailing the dissolution of staff and volunteers, the redistribution of property, etc. It was noted in one of the interviews that not only the status of “foreign agent,” but also other reasons contributed to the decision to liquidate. These included the inability to attract financing with which to pay salaries and maintain an office as well as administrative obstacles put in place by regional authorities. Such a response is typical for civil society organizations from the low-resource niche with limited access because the “foreign agent” law prevents them from obtaining remaining resources, therefore inhibiting their organizational development.

Compliance as a strategic response is exhibited when civil society organizations maintain close relationships with regional authorities and receive significant state financing. As one respondent from a socially-oriented civil society organization put it:

We comply with the “foreign agents” law, we publish it everywhere, even publish on some leaflets in small print that the organization is included on this list. We will emerge slowly and carefully. (Respondent D)

Organizations react in this way in order to try to retain the support of the state and be removed from the “foreign agent” list as soon as possible. In interviews with the managers of such civil society organizations, it was evident that after inclusion in the register, the routine activity of the organization was substantially disrupted; since they did not consider themselves in opposition to the regime, the best strategy for these organizations was to forgo foreign funding entirely. For organizations in the opposite niche (resource-poor with restricted access), compliance is a last-resort attempt to preserve the organization. The other option for the latter type, short of re-registration or complete termination, is deinstitutionalization (reduction in the scale of operations).

In the resource-rich niche with restricted options, the general strategy consists of circumventing the burdens created by the law. *Formal liquidation* allows organizations to remain active as an informal group of activists. An example is “reverse professionalization”: dispensing with the indicators of a professional civil society organization (staff, office, management entities) while continuing to engage in organizational activities, even with informal status. This entails personally taking on the risk associated with the lack of institutional financing and collaboration with the government as a legal entity. Another option is *re-registration*. Electoral watchdog Golos and the abovementioned Agora represent this type of response, which allows an organization to retain its financial, reputational, and organizational support, maintain activity, and continue its work.

Institutional resistance refers to developing protective mechanisms (specific trainings, precautionary measures, organizational restructuring) and attempting to defend an organization’s position in court. One respondent, whose organization was eventually removed from the list, admitted that the institutional resistance strategy is very costly as it diverts resources from other activities. Others established holdings or subsidiaries of their organizations with the intention of diverting the “foreign agent” label from the parent organization. Commercial organizations were also created, as the law concerns only the non-commercial sector.

In sum, the law on “foreign agents,” despite its presumably selective character, affected the entire field. Organizations directly targeted by the law faced restrictions in access to resource flows, and those operating under resource-poor and resource-rich conditions responded differently.

The former could only choose between termination and deinstitutionalization. The latter had more opportunities to resist and adapt to the environment. However, civil society organizations from the two niches with unrestricted access also needed to adjust. The organizations with resource-poor conditions had to reconsider their prospects for organizational development, while those with more resources were obliged to reaffirm their compliance and loyalty in order to maintain their access to resource flows. In other words, in combination with other regulations affecting civil society, the “foreign agents” law appears to have had a profound impact on the organizational development of civil society in Russia.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates different trajectories taken by civil society organizations in response to the changing political environment in post-Soviet Russia. Guided by organizational theory and resource dependence theory, this research offers evidence for the argument that the government’s actions, providing differential access to resource flows and imposing restrictive regulations, have created specific organizational niches that shape the further organizational trajectories of civil society organizations. The processes of substitution of independent sources of financing with state grants and subsidies, as well as the limiting of access to resources for some groups, created “winners” and “losers.” This conclusion is in keeping with the growing literature on authoritarian governance of civil society, which demonstrates that autocracies are interested less in suppressing civil initiatives than in controlling them, including for the purpose of a regime’s own legitimation (Lorch & Bunk, 2016; Richter & Hatch, 2013). Access to resources under these conditions is among the principal factors in organizations’ survival, and an authoritarian state’s manipulation of the rules of access represents a means of both controlling civil society organizations and fragmenting the community (Dupuy et al., 2015; Hsu, 2010; Yu, 2016).

The evidence in this chapter advances the argument that Russian civil society organizations understand the tradeoff between loyalty and autonomy. Organizations that prioritize the latter employ the

“under-the-radar” model to the detriment of their access to institutional resources (including governmental or foreign funding). They also minimize contact with the state, thus effectively limiting the scope of their operations as well as their prospects for institutionalization. Organizations whose activity requires a larger scale of operations are forced to comply with the requirements of the state or to wage an intensifying struggle to change the rules of access to resources. In short, the “foreign agents” law has profoundly changed the atmosphere in civil society and further aggravated the division into “compliant” and “independent” segments. Moreover, the *de facto* ban on foreign financing has rendered the authoritarian Russian state a major sponsor of civic organizations.

Does this mean that Russian civil society will be completely absorbed by the state, that is, that “puppet” organizations (Crotty et al., 2014) will unconditionally dominate the field? It seems to us that an affirmative answer to this question is premature: in organizational terms, Russian civil society has developed a significant potential for resilience and, despite environmental pressure, is able to adapt to change. Variations in adaptability in specific types of civil society organizations, as well as the role of contextual factors, are emerging as important areas for future research.

Notes

1. Federal Law No. 121-FZ “On amendments to specific legal acts of the Russian Federation with regard to regulation of activities of nonprofit organizations performing functions of ‘foreign agents,’” 20 June 2012.
2. A study of changes in the civil society of Ethiopia after the adoption of a similar law shows that the depopulation of the “NGO on paper” was the most visible (Dupuy et al., 2015).
3. See further, for example, the history of court opposition of the Perm Civil Chamber and the Procurator of the Perm region (Tikhonovich, 2013).
4. It is difficult to track exact statistics from the Ministry of Justice as the Ministry frequently changes its procedures: for example, in December 2016, information on excluded and liquidated organizations was deleted from the list.
5. In order to guarantee the anonymity of respondents, the names and locations of the organizations are not shown.

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8

Navigating Contemporary Developments in Swedish Civil Society: The Case of Save the Children Sweden

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The focus of this chapter is how civil society organizations relate to contemporary reconfigurations of state, civil society, and market relations in Sweden. Sweden is usually highlighted in civil society research as an interesting case that challenges established theories regarding the feasibility of combining a strong state and a vibrant civil society (Casey, 2016; Salamon & Anheier, 1998). In international comparison, the large public sector in Sweden has historically meant that associations and other organizations engaged in charity or direct welfare production are relatively few (Lundström & Wijkström, 1997). It is on this basis that the structure of Swedish civil society has been categorized in terms of a popular social movement (*folkrörelse*) model with an emphasis on voluntary engagement and membership and with a focus on organizing people's leisure time and serving as a channel for political voice and civic training (Jeppsson-Grassman & Svedberg, 2007; Wijkström & Lundström, 2002).

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In relation to processes conceptualized in the international literature as a merging of the logics or blurring of the borders of civil society, state, and the market (Maier et al., 2016), overall developments in Sweden since the 1990s have been characterized as a dislocation from direct democratic influence and advocacy toward market- and government-oriented forms of engagement (Lundström & Wijkström, 1997; von Essen & Svedberg, 2020; Wijkström & Einarsson, 2006). As a reaction against general development tendencies, more recent studies have also demonstrated how new initiatives, for example, social media actors (Johansson & Scaramuzzino, Chap. 12 in this volume) and justice movements working for housing rights (Polanska, 2019) in Sweden, emerge beyond or in opposition to this development. Fewer studies have engaged with the ways in which established organizations navigate within these new configurations and how tensions and struggles between idea(l)s and resources manifest themselves within organizations' operations and strategies. Aligned with the overall aim of this edited volume and its emphasis on organizational agency, resourcefulness, and space to maneuver in a changing organizational environment, this chapter draws on the current developments of Save the Children Sweden, one of the country's most prominent and established civil society organizations.

Save the Children Sweden is a membership organization in which an elected board is responsible for the organization's orientation of activities and overall ambitions. The members are organized through approximately 100 local associations in 25 regions. Day-to-day operations are carried out by professional staff under the direction of a Secretary General. Save the Children Sweden also comprises a separate youth association.

The organization is known to the wider Swedish public primarily for its extensive programs in international aid and disaster relief in developing and war-torn countries. Until the 1990s, the activities directed toward beneficiaries in Sweden consisted mainly of knowledge production, outreach, and advocacy work, including producing and distributing reports, workshops, teaching materials, and handbooks. Operational activities were, however, carried out on a voluntary basis in the regional and local branches and were usually not coordinated nationally; engagement and initiatives varied between regions and over time. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the organization has begun to work more actively

within Sweden, with increased operational activity and direct support for the most vulnerable children and their families. Specific attention is given in this chapter to two different and, to some extent, contradictory initiatives in Save the Children's newly expanded activity: the community work program On Equal Terms (*På lika villkor*) and the corporate business Save the Children Welfare, Inc. (*Rädda Barnen välfärd AB*), established in order to facilitate the organization's attempt to become an actor on the publicly funded welfare market. Hence, this chapter illuminates the strategic approach and practical implementation of the reorientation of Save the Children Sweden in relation to contemporary negotiations of the role of civil society in Sweden. In doing so, the analysis also draws attention to how the organization navigates the possibilities and constraints of exploring newly available resources.

Save the Children Sweden is one of the largest civil society organizations in Sweden; although it portrays itself as a popular social movement (Anér, 1984; Rädda Barnen, 2019), it has not been selected here to represent a typical case or an ideal type embodying the fundamental aspects of Swedish civil society. Of interest is, rather, the organization's history of navigating the idea of Western humanitarian aid fundamental to the establishment of Save the Children in the early 1900s, when extensive responsibility on the part of the Swedish state was to replace the "outdated" and unequal relations between givers and receivers ingrained in philanthropy and charity (Åberg, 2015). Even if Save the Children Sweden early on came to mimic traditional popular social movements in, for example, the structure of the organization with a membership base, it can rarely be said to be guided by the imperative "by the people, for the people" (Olofsson, 1995). In this respect, children are a specific group in which direct and long-term organizing, particularly given the span of their ages, is particularly challenging and, in some cases, not feasible. In the field of child protection, it is the rule rather than the exception that different forms of expertise speak in favor of, and have views on, the needs of their beneficiaries (Lundström, 2001). In other words, Save the Children's establishment and later developments in Sweden form a history of continuous negotiations of parallel and sometimes contradictory ideals. As such, Save the Children Sweden is a critical case (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Stinchcombe, 2005) that is particularly well-suited to illustrating

overall processes of change within and for civil society organizations in Sweden as well as opportunities for organizational agency.

This study contributes to the always topical discussion of the relationship between institutional pressures and organizations' space to maneuver as they (reactively or proactively) respond to, avoid, adjust to, or confront conformity (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Oliver, 1991). In relation to this volume and its theme of resourcefulness, the case study of Save the Children's current reorientation helps to highlight active, conscious internal negotiations that cannot be reduced to a static division between adjusting and resisting.

This chapter draws primarily on text and document analysis of the organization's formal and informal documentation and web page¹; the analysis is supplemented with informal conversations and interviews conducted between May 2020 and May 2021 with informants in strategic positions within Save the Children Sweden. Prior to this study, I was engaged in a participatory research project on the work and development of On Equal Terms in Stockholm and Malmö (Kings et al., 2019; Mulinari et al., 2021), which provided me with access to Save the Children Sweden. During my field work, I observed how the ideas and establishment of Welfare, Inc. had been realized. This raised several new questions regarding the organization's founding mission, its ongoing development, and its role in Swedish civil society. By means of documents and other texts, together with the help of clarifying conversations, observations, and interviews, I explore Save the Children Sweden's position, choice of path, and strategic development in relation to changing prerequisites for civil society organizing in Sweden.

Contradictory Ideals in Swedish Civil Society

The reorientation of Save the Children Sweden must be understood in relation to the context-specific outcomes of current configurations in the relationships among the state, the market, and civil society. With Sweden's historical civil society ideal and its contemporary negotiations, the country's civil society organizations are now facing what is here argued to have

become a more complex setting in which contradictory ideals from different eras exert simultaneous pressure on civil society organizations.

The recent history of civil society in Sweden is usually discussed in relation to Sweden's process of democratization in the 1800s and 1900s, the establishment of the universal welfare state, and the role of so-called popular social movements, with the labor movement, the revivalist movement, and the temperance movement as crown jewels (Micheletti, 1995). The distinct characteristics that emerged from these movements include voluntary commitment, an emphasis on work and leisure, a change-oriented nature, and a spatial structure that binds the local, regional, and national levels (Lundström & Wijkström, 1997; Tranvik & Selle, 2007). In this way, the movement model connects different parts of people's lives and serves as a direct democratic channel linking their needs and demands with decision-makers. This channel is important for people, usually those with fewer resources and weaker networks, who have less opportunity to make their voices heard or to influence societal development in other ways.

The emphasis on popular social movements is also related to the Swedish history of combining a strong state with an extensive civil society, with civil society accorded a complementary role but not assuming the responsibilities of the state (Lundström, 2001). Bo Rothstein (1992) has described this as a form of democratic corporativism in which civil society acts freely but is also closely linked to the state (cf. Trägårdh, 2007). According to Lars Trägårdh (2007), this is based on a Hegelian ideal in which the state embodies universal interests and is seen as the representative of the public good and, thus, the nation. In other words, the state and civil society in Sweden have not been pitted against each other as in, for example, traditions more prominent in eastern Europe, where an autonomous civil society is emphasized as necessary to defend citizens' freedoms as these are under constant threat from the state.

Despite the fact that the label "popular social movement" retains its positive connotations and is seen as a stamp of legitimacy in the public and political discourse, it has been posited that the traditional popular social movement ideal is currently under renegotiation (Wijkström, 2012). The contemporary renegotiation of and dislocations in Swedish civil society are to be understood in relation to a general societal development toward increased inequality between different groups and regions

(Kings, 2018), reinforced by the introduction of a mixed welfare model with increasing liberal market elements (Johansson et al., 2015) and characterized by deregulation, recommodification, cuts in public expenditures, and reverse redistribution from the public to the private sector (Allelin et al., 2021). A wave of deregulation in the 1990s, comprising the privatization of public care and opening the welfare markets for private actors, led to an increase in the delivery of welfare services by private actors within the (still tax-financed) sectors of education, elderly care, and health care (Righard et al., 2015). With the aim to broaden the range of actors active in delivering welfare services in Sweden, the initiative Civil Society Public Partnership (*Idéburet offentligt partnerskap*) was introduced in 2010 and made new economic resources available for civil society organizations (Reuter et al., 2012).

According to Filip Wijkström (2012), the relationship between state and civil society has been altered to form a “reverse order of conversation” in which civil society organizations, which have historically had a voice-carrying function, have increasingly come to play an executive role in the production and delivery of social services. This has also been accompanied by the changed nature of public funding for civil society. We are experiencing a shift “from grants to reimbursement” whereby the public sector’s expectations of civil society organizations have evolved to include the taking on of specific assignments through projects or running publicly funded welfare services on a contract basis. Civil society’s previously strong relationship with the state in Sweden (as in the rest of Scandinavia), especially due to its involvement in policymaking, has shifted toward the market approach, particularly in the form of the delivery of welfare services (Grubb & Henriksen, 2019; Wijkström, 2011).

Although the public’s interest and engagement in assisting civil society with resources in the form of donations or volunteering have not diminished (Amnå, 2008; von Essen & Svedberg, 2020), there is a clear trend toward a decrease in members and reduced influence of members in favor of paid professionals (Papakostas, 2011). Paid staff tend to manage civil society organizations, while members are transformed into supporters who donate money or participate in services or activities rather than being active in—and identifying with—the organization (Papakostas, 2011). In short, this means that there is a trend toward the replacement

of traditional membership and voluntary work by professional service providers, and that civil society organizations are increasingly being run like public authorities and companies (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). The constitutive idea of the popular social movement ideal, that civil society is to be regarded as a complement to and not a replacement for state responsibility, stands in contrast to current transformations and has led some to question the future role of civil society in democracy (Papakostas, 2011).

These modifications illustrate how the boundaries between civil society, state, and market in Sweden are shifting; as a result, the relationship between state and civil society, which in the Nordic states if not in Sweden itself has been argued to be relatively unique in the world, is being renegotiated in such a way that it increasingly resembles that of classic liberal welfare states (Wijkström, 2012). Systemic shifts, competing perspectives on the role of civil society, and a professionalization of organizations are put forth in the literature as central tendencies in Swedish civil society that are also ingrained in the ideals that emerged as the country's popular social movements came into being. It is in the context of this contemporary civil society landscape, with its increasingly blurred borders and contradictory ideals, that this chapter discusses Save the Children Sweden, its reorientation, and its use of newly available resources.

Introducing the Case of Save the Children Sweden

Having celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2019, Save the Children is today one of the world's largest civil society organizations working for children's rights and well-being; it currently employs 25,000 individuals across 117 countries (Save the Children, 2021). Save the Children International has, since 2009, been one united umbrella organization with national organizations as members (Kloster, 2019). In addition to its role as a leading global relief and aid organization for children affected by human and natural disasters, its statutory work also includes advocacy for children's rights on the national and supranational levels. Two of the organization's primary

and long-term objectives have been the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the abolishment of corporal punishment of children (Gnaerig & Maccormack, 1999).

Save the Children was initially born out of the radical anti-war movement in England during the First World War; however, Emily Baughan and Juliano Fiori (2015) have argued that, early on, Save the Children turned to “non-politics [...], centering on the innocent, pre-political child—the image of unsullied humanity” (p. 130). In 1919, only months after the organization’s formation in England, the Swedish branch of Save the Children was established and, like its sister organization, primarily assisted child victims of the war. Save the Children expanded to additional countries; at the outset, its activities concentrated primarily on international relief and, subsequently, aid work (Lundström, 2001; Nehlin, 2009).

During its now century-long history, Save the Children’s focus and organizational structure have undergone several shifts both internationally and in its respective national contexts. Ann Nehlin (2009) asserted that the development of Save the Children Sweden, from 1938 to 1956, must be understood in relation to the parallel construction of the Swedish welfare state. The developing Swedish welfare state, with its comparatively far-reaching ambitions, involved a redefinition of international politics and the role of philanthropy and charity. The work that philanthropic organizations had provided was to be taken over by Swedish state authorities. At the time, Save the Children Sweden was in a phase of organizational maturation and was gaining members. The organization negotiated with Swedish authorities and other already established organizations working on similar issues, such as the Red Cross and UNICEF, to define and develop Save the Children’s positions in both national and international arenas (Nehlin, 2009). The Swedish branch of Save the Children took on the role of an expert organization; it cooperated with and oriented itself closely to the government. The organizational structure of Save the Children Sweden came to resemble that of the popular social movements, with a democratic structure, membership, and an organization that combined local, regional, and national levels (Anér,

1984). In other words, the establishment of Save the Children in Sweden merged ideas of Western humanitarian aid that were representative of the inter-war period (Baughan & Fiori, 2015) with the expansion of the Swedish welfare state (Nehlin, 2009) and the central role of a popular social movement tradition to develop a rhetoric and practice suitable for the Swedish context at that time.

The Reorientation of Save the Children Sweden

In light of intensified processes of segregation and the inability of the state to ensure that the rights of children in Sweden are secured, Save the Children has, since the beginning of the 2000s, complemented its action repertoire with further operational activity directed at target groups in Sweden. With the exception of activities organized on a voluntary basis through local associations, the activities of Save the Children in Sweden until the 1990s consisted primarily of educational and advocacy work aimed mainly at various professionals working with children. The increased focus of the organization on professional operational activity in Sweden has been taking place in a somewhat changed civil society landscape that is characterized by parallel and to some extent contrasting ideals. Furthermore, apart from membership fees, gifts, and monthly donations, which account for a relatively small part of Save the Children's income, few of the organization's traditional sources of income can secure these forms of long-term investment. Financing this reorientation toward operational activities to ensure that the rights of children and young people in Sweden are met has also included the use of newly available or expanding financial resources. Two activities that illustrate the new orientation of Save the Children Sweden particularly well, and illuminate the internal negotiations of the organization's role and function in contemporary Swedish civil society, are On Equal Terms and Save the Children Welfare, Inc. Both aim to increase the presence of Save the Children on the ground in the form of employed staff working for the most vulnerable children in Sweden.

On Equal Terms and Save the Children Welfare, Inc.

The seed for what today is On Equal Terms was a series of several projects in Gothenburg, Malmö, and Stockholm which were funded by external project resources. The projects started in 2008–2009 with a focus on developing activities and methods for children, young people, and parents in socioeconomically deprived areas (Rädda Barnen, 2018). As the projects came to an end in 2011–2012, Save the Children Sweden decided to make its work in socioeconomically deprived areas permanent. Central arguments for this continued work included the need for a long-term perspective and a grassroots approach according to which activities are designed together with the participants (Rädda Barnen, 2016a). The vision guiding On Equal Terms is that:

all children and young people in Sweden, regardless of background and environment, should have the same opportunities and rights to participate in society without being discriminated against or marginalized and that all children and young people should be given the opportunity to imagine their futures and realize their dreams. (Rädda Barnen, 2016a, p. 3, author's translation)

Community work (Poppo, 2015) is central to the action repertoire of On Equal Terms. Maintaining a continuous presence in marginalized neighborhoods and networking with local actors, together with so-called direct support activities such as various forums for girls, boys, and parents, are representative of its work. The concrete activities are designed together, according to the needs of the target groups, with the aim to embrace both individual and collective needs such as opportunities for work and education, strengthening the local organization and good living environments, and outreach activities. An important component of On Equal Terms has been the recruitment of professional young employees who also have established networks and backgrounds in socioeconomically deprived districts and/or backgrounds including migration and economic vulnerability (Mulinari et al., 2021). As of 2021, a total of about 30 persons were working for On Equal Terms. Although their work varies in different areas and cities, the staff

members have assumed the role of community workers by being on site and creating relationships, organizing youth forums, supporting local organizing, building trust, and developing platforms for collaboration.

Financially, On Equal Terms' resource-intensive activities have been made possible by Save the Children's cultivation of long-term business partnerships. Slightly more than 80 percent of On Equal Terms' operations are financed through corporate collaborations (Mulinari et al., 2021). The business collaborations are organized as long-term partnerships with main partners who, in addition to receiving acknowledgement for their economic assistance, engage in operations by contributing within their areas of expertise. This engagement has been realized through, for example, providing internships for youth, developing tools for measuring the impact of social investments, and donating furniture to decorate public meeting places (Kings et al., 2019). Furthermore, since 2017, ambitions have grown to develop a so-called partnership model for in-depth collaborations between academia, businesses, and the public sector, including other established civil society organizations and local associations. The ambition is for different actors to create new approaches together in order to avoid internal competition and strengthen the long-term outlook. The overall idea is to expand collaboration with other actors around common goals, financing, activities, resources, and expertise with a long-term and cohesive perspective.

In 2018, Save the Children took the first step toward becoming an actor in the welfare service market by establishing the limited company Save the Children Welfare, Inc., which reports to the board of Save the Children. The establishment of Save the Children Welfare, Inc. has been presented as related to experiences gained from the work of On Equal Terms and the reality of the living conditions that characterize the situation of children and their families in socioeconomically deprived areas (Rädda Barnen, 2017, n.d.). In its strategic plan for 2017–2021, Save the Children Sweden (2016b) emphasized the need to further advance its position to ensure that children's rights are met by means of publicly funded welfare services. The introduction of a publicly funded welfare market with different forms of procurement for certain types of service providers, for example schools and youth centers, has led to the potential to obtain new economic resources for both non-profit and for-profit

organizations. Save the Children Welfare, Inc. was established to facilitate participation in procurements, contracts, and cooperations in publicly funded welfare services.

Save the Children has stressed that the launch of Save the Children Welfare, Inc. and its new role as a state-funded service provider are tied to the inability of the welfare state to address the needs of the most marginalized children and to counteract the fact that the market for welfare services in Sweden has tended to reward for-profit organizations, placing children in socioeconomically deprived areas in an even more vulnerable position (Rädda Barnen, 2017):

The background is that the Swedish welfare state is weakening as a result of several trends, which together create problems for the public sector, political challenges to the “welfare contract” between citizens and the state, and the risk of reduced societal trust. Competition for resources and political reluctance to address the problems will affect those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, especially children. (Rädda Barnen, n.d., p. 28, author’s translation)

The organization portrays itself as an alternative that can offer more added value than the for-profit business actors that today make up the majority of competitive welfare providers. By incorporating the operation of welfare services into the work that has already been developed through *On Equal Terms*, Save the Children emphasizes, it can further strengthen its work, which it hopes will prove an important competitive advantage in future procurements (Rädda Barnen, n.d.). Additionally, the publicly funded welfare services managed by Save the Children Welfare, Inc. are, as with *On Equal Terms*, seen as necessary for contributing to knowledge about the relevant target groups and their living conditions, which in turn enables and gives legitimacy to the organization’s continued role as an advocate for children’s rights (Rädda Barnen, 2016b, 2017). As Save the Children Welfare, Inc. is still in its infancy, having started by taking over the management of two Stockholm youth centers in 2021, it is not possible to comment on whether public resources are sufficient for the activities that the organization aims to conduct—or in what way these and other operations by, for example, *On Equal Terms* will reinforce each other.

Toward an Avant-Garde Professionalism?

The reorientation of Save the Children Sweden, here illustrated by the continuation and reinforcement of On Equal Terms, community work for social mobilization, and the establishment of Save the Children Welfare, Inc., exemplifies to a large extent an adjustment to a general trajectory of a more service-oriented civil society characterized by “professionalization,” “NGO-ization,” “marketization,” “hybridization,” etc. (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Maier et al., 2016). This development has been made possible by taking advantage of newly available resources, in this case, by developing business partnerships and becoming an actor in Sweden’s relatively new welfare market. One instance of the effect that the reorientation has had on the organization can be observed in the growth of Save the Children Sweden’s professional staff; the number of employees has risen from 231 in 2009 to 370 in 2019.² However, Save the Children Sweden has lost 22,000 members, with numbers declining from 86,000 members in 1999 to 64,000 in 2019. Similarly, and also during the same period, the number of local associations (in which members primarily conduct direct support activities and fundraising on a voluntary basis) has decreased from 219 to 140 (Rädda Barnen, 2010, 2020a). At the same time, the reorientation of Save the Children has entailed negotiations related to the popular social movement ideal; these have long been a guiding principle for the organization of civil society in Sweden. Aspects of both adjustment and resistance to an institutional setting in transformation are illuminated in Save the Children’s strategic approach to reorientation.

The strategic plan for 2017–2021 emphasizes that the point of departure for this development is a societal development as a result of which a growing group of children in Sweden are living in socially and economically vulnerable conditions (Rädda Barnen, 2016b). Particularly in socio-economically deprived areas, many children’s life chances are limited due to societal challenges related to inadequacies in schooling, living environment, health, and the labor market. Deficiencies, and lack of trust, in public welfare institutions contribute to further vulnerability. As such, it is argued that:

[...] civil society, including Save the Children, needs to step in to secure the rights of all children through social innovation. Holistic efforts are needed from society as a whole to give all children access to their rights. (Rädda Barnen, 2016b, p. 13, author's translation)

This overall transition is to be realized through several strategic shifts, firstly through a streamlining of operations in Sweden toward the most vulnerable and marginalized children. The identified target groups are “children in socio-economic vulnerability,” “children in migration,” and “children who are exposed to violence.” Secondly, Save the Children's role as an advocacy organization is to be supplemented with additional activities for the relevant target groups (Rädda Barnen, 2016b). The ambition to develop various forms of support and activities for and together with the relevant groups is related to increased segregation in Sweden and its negative effects for the most vulnerable children; furthermore, the organization requires further knowledge of the relevant target groups in order to retain legitimacy and credibly advocate for the rights of children in Sweden. In addition, there is a pronounced drive, based on the further emphasis on operational activities, to build a larger and more representative member base and increase the number of local associations through direct support activities. By developing “professional non-profit activities” as well as increased knowledge assurance and method development, this orientation and prioritization can be regarded as part of Save the Children's endeavor to find its future place in a changing civil society landscape.

In light of the historical relation between civil society and the state in Sweden, with its popular social movement ideal, the development of both On Equal Terms and Save the Children Welfare, Inc. challenges ingrained ideas of the traditional role of Swedish civil society in different ways. As an actor on the welfare market, Save the Children Welfare, Inc. goes against the deep-rooted idea that civil society is to be a complement to but not a substitute for the state in the carrying out of responsibilities. The fear usually expressed is that civil society would otherwise expand into the territory of the state and that it would, in the long run, contribute to undermining the responsibility of the welfare state. The daily activity of On Equal Terms' community workers does not directly challenge

the role of civil society versus the state in the same way, but it similarly challenges the traditional ideal of membership and autonomy. With the expanding welfare state of the 1900s, the broad responsibility of the state was to replace earlier eras' dependence on goodwill in the forms of philanthropy and charity in order for people's basic needs to be fulfilled (Åberg, 2015). Given this history, bringing back an updated version of charity or philanthropy in the form of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a controversial issue; dependence on external resources and professionalization could limit the democratic function of civil society as a provider of and channel for direct democracy and democratic education for the ordinary citizen (Amnå, 2008).

In an attempt to resist mission drift and navigate the most evident conflicts with the popular social movement tradition, Save the Children Sweden argues that the responsibility should lie with the state, but that the organization must redefine its role, take responsibility, and act when the state fails to develop and deliver high-quality, non-profit welfare for Sweden's most deprived children (Rädda Barnen, 2016b, n.d.). This argumentation leans on a specific version of a limited category of civil society organizations that provide and protect the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in a highly institutionalized welfare society. These organizations cater to the particular needs of society's most vulnerable citizens, such as homeless people, those with addictions, and those seeking asylum, who generally avoid or have little trust in public authorities. The specific version of this category is what Tommy Lundström (2001) conceptualized as *avant-garde professionalism*, in which hired experts manage and run activities with the aim not only to provide for those in need, but also to serve as predecessors and pressure other actors, especially in the public sector, to acknowledge the rights and needs of a specific group. In a welfare society such as Sweden's, *avant-garde professionalism* has experienced limited application but has been significant in articulating the rights and needs of minority groups, including refugees and LGBT community members. According to Tommy Lundström (2001), Save the Children started working in this direction in the 1990s, preceding today's reorientation of Save the Children Sweden, by opening two clinics with hired professional staff who offered psychotherapy to child victims of sexual abuse (at first, primarily boys) and

to refugee children who had experienced trauma. The urgent needs of these groups were seen by Save the Children as either unrecognized or insufficiently met by the state. From the limited activities of the 1990s, the reorientation of Save the Children in the forms of On Equal Terms and Save the Children Welfare, Inc. illustrates how avant-garde professionalism has been incorporated and established as a core strategic approach and a way for the organization to navigate in a transformed civil society landscape.

Nonetheless, it should be added that the reorientation of Save the Children Sweden has involved critical voices and internal struggles. Especially controversial has been Save the Children's establishment as a registered company in order to produce publicly funded welfare. For example, during the 2020 annual general meeting, the board rejected the idea of opening schools in the name of Save the Children (Rädda Barnen, 2020b) as the responsibility was regarded at that time as too extensive. Other concerns raised in the organization include that this reorientation, rather than being anchored throughout the organization's staff and members, is decoupled from them, as well as that the search for possible procurements will compromise the content of the operation and potentially conflict with other activities of Save the Children. Regardless of whether Save the Children's approach is or will be successful, the case study of Save the Children Sweden illuminates the fact that, the more complex the institutional setting, the more blurred the distinctions between adjustment and resistance become.

Conclusions

This chapter has engaged with the issue of how civil society organizations relate to contemporary reconfigurations of state, civil society, and market relations in Sweden. The recent reorientation of the case study organization, Save the Children, illustrates one way to navigate in a complex institutional setting characterized by contradictory pressures dating from different eras. The popular social movement ideal of membership as a complement to state responsibility and a channel for political voice and civic training still enjoys significant currency in Sweden, especially in

terms of conferring the legitimacy needed to secure political resources and to participate in the societal debate. At the same time, Sweden is increasingly adapting to a more service-oriented and market-adjusted civil society. The possibility of garnering new financial resources in the forms of state procurements or business partnerships entails new demands, specifications, and monitoring of resources, steering civil society toward a role of welfare provider with its accompanying aspects of professionalization. Taken together, these developments have led to a more complex institutional setting in which contradictory ideals from different eras simultaneously exert pressure on civil society.

The case of Save the Children Sweden and its contemporary reorientation, here illustrated by *On Equal Terms* and *Save the Children Welfare, Inc.*, illustrates the ambition to try to reconcile these parallel and contradictory ideals. By making use of new openings in the form of newly available resources to meet what it identifies as the increased needs of children in socioeconomically vulnerable neighborhoods, Save the Children's strategic approach indicates that it is not adjusting simply to become an executor of specific services on behalf of business actors or the state. The operative turn of Save the Children Sweden, with a professionalization of staff in terms of grassroots bureaucrats working directly with children in marginalized neighborhoods, is posited as a way of pressuring the state to acknowledge its responsibility. At the same time, becoming an organization that works directly with children in Sweden rather than working for the rights of children, as was earlier the case, is argued to be a way of strengthening knowledge about the relevant target groups and their specific living conditions. In contrast to its earlier role of offering only expertise, Save the Children Sweden sees these activities as further legitimating its continued advocacy for children's rights and carving out a new role in Sweden's changing civil society, employing what has here been conceptualized as *avant-garde professionalism*.

As this chapter demonstrates, the future development of civil society can only be understood in the context of specific national negotiations of general processes and the internal tensions and struggles that occur within and between organizations. With regard to institutional pressures, the case of Save the Children Sweden illuminates the space of maneuvering when it comes to combinations of avoiding, adjusting to, and resisting

conformity. It also highlights how the civil society landscape is constantly changing, visualizing organizational transformation as a series of vibrant and coexisting processes of dying out, expansion, reorientation, downsizing, and creation (Ahrne & Papakostas, 1994). The long-term results of Save the Children Sweden's current reorientation are, however, yet unknown. The tides of time and conditions inherent in different kinds of external resources have proven to tend toward conformity (Meyer & Rowan, 1977); over time, this may cause a reduction in the establishment of novel organizations or in the invention of creative strategies in already existing organizations. It remains to be seen whether the development of Save the Children Sweden will ultimately lead to an abandonment of the avant-garde and simply proceed in the direction of professionalism.

Notes

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2. These numbers also include staff working with the international program, which limits their accuracy.

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9

Humane Resources? The People Behind Polish Civil Society Organizations

Galia Chimiak

The objective of this chapter is to discuss the evolution of the human resources of civil society organizations in Poland against the background of the changes that have been taking place in the country and its civil society since the 1980s. It was in 1980 that the Solidarity movement emerged in then-socialist Poland, and liberal Western scholars enthused over the “rebirth” or “revival” of its civil society (Pełczyński, 1988). This chapter focuses on three broad changes in human resources in Polish civil society that have taken place since that time. First, it casts light on the dynamic development and gradual internationalization, aided by foreign donors, of Polish civil society after 1989. The second trend is a donor-induced change in norms and practices that contributed to the ousting of communitarian values by individualist ones. Finally, the adverse effect of civil society organizations’ recent practices on their human resources is discussed. To identify the factors that impacted the dynamic

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reorganization of the civil society sphere and its associated human resources over this 40-year period, the historical and structural determinants of these developments are taken into account while focusing on the agential aspect of the observed changes. In addition to its overview of literature relevant to the analysis of the human resources under examination, this chapter is based on original empirical investigations of civil society activists in Poland.

According to resource mobilization theory (Jenkins, 1983), which was developed to account for the social movements of the 1960s, people represent only one type of resources for societal self-organization. Other resources include—but are not limited to—money, time, organizational structure, goods and services, work, social bonds, social support, and legitimacy. The focus on human resources is theoretically and empirically justified. Unlike demand-side theories (Hansmann, 1987), which assume that civil society entities are set up to meet a demand that has not been satisfied by profit-seeking organizations or the state, supply-side theorizing (James, 1987) emphasizes the contribution of individuals engaged in civil society organizations. Supply-side theorists contend that activists' motivations and backgrounds provide the major explanatory variable accounting for the establishment and running of those organizations (*ibid.*). Some even argue that the growing number of civil society organizations during the late twentieth century and early 2000s has been caused by an oversupply of credentialed professionals competing for work and status in this sphere (Turner, 2010). Moreover, as Mitchell and Schmitz (2014) demonstrated with the example of transnational NGOs, even under financial constraints, individuals' motivations and principles form a stable component of organizational identity and are central to how those entities pursue their missions. In short, demand-oriented concepts seem to be able to account for the establishment of organizations, but it nevertheless takes “special types of human beings, with special personalities” (Badelt, 1997, pp. 172–173) to provide the supply. In this chapter, the focus is set on the characteristics that make organizations' human resources special.

Overview of Earlier Research

There is copious literature dealing with human resources in civil society organizations. However, where most quantitative studies rely primarily on information related to associational membership, existing qualitative research includes classifications and typologies of individuals engaged in civil society as well as case studies. For instance, one of the better-known classifications of social movements' human resources distinguishes between "adherents" and "constituencies" (Zald & Useem, 1987), thus drawing a distinction between the former, who are truly involved and believe in the mission of the movement, and the latter, who are merely members. Another example is Dennis Young's typology of "nonprofit entrepreneurs," which distinguishes among artists, professionals, believers, searchers, independents, conservers, power-seekers, controllers, and income-seekers (Young, 1983 in Steinberg, 2013).

Even a succinct review of the literature on civil society's human resources must also take into account the "parallel research universes" (Lewis, 1999, p. 1) of studies examining non-governmental organizations and those analyzing non-profit firms. In the area of human resources, scholars from the former of these schools write about "social activists" (Chimiak, 2006; Koralewicz & Malewska-Peyre, 1998), while those assuming the latter approach study "religious," "ideological," or "social" entrepreneurs (Grenier, 1997; James, 1987). To further complicate the field, scholars of international relations focus on "rooted cosmopolitans" (Tarrow, 2005) or "norm entrepreneurs" (Ingebritsen, 2002), while those in development studies define the individuals engaged as "humanitarian aid workers" (Lansky, 2014), "non-governmental professionals" (Lewis, 2013), or even "accidental aid workers" (Pollet et al., 2014). The human resources of social movements, on the other hand, are oftentimes described by the particular ideology they promote, such as "environmentalists, feminists, squatters" (Žuk, 2001). Other case studies refer to human resources as "animal rights/welfare activists" (Jacobsson, 2017), "tenants' activists" (Polanska, 2017), and so on. In other words, in this research field, different disciplines and theoretical traditions highlight different aspects of what is here understood as human resources. Even

when we focus on a specific segment of this embodied resource, the literature proves to be extensive and versatile.

Perhaps the most voluminous literature on human resources in civil society deals with volunteers. There are quantitative cross-national studies on volunteering in general (Salamon & Sokołowski, 2001; Sardinha & Pires, 2011) as well as case studies of volunteers engaging with specific issues, for example, of “AIDS volunteers” (Omoto & Snyder, 1995), “serious leisure” volunteers (Stebbins, 1996), and returning international volunteers (Raport o zaangażowaniu wolontariuszy..., 2013). There are analyses comparing paid workers and volunteers (Pearce, 1983) as well as “amateurs and professionals” (Karli, 1998). As of late, yet others focus on volunteer organizations’ “leaders” (Markham et al., 2001) or “civil society CEOs” (Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations 2018). There is also literature on those who provide financial support for civil society organizations, such as historical analyses of charitable engagement (Mazur, 1999), elite philanthropists (Ostrower, 1995), and, more contemporarily, philanthro-capitalists (Moran, 2014). These studies focus on exploring how volunteers acquire and express their identities, skills, knowledge, and experience; how they build relationship structures and hierarchies; how their attitudes relate to behavior; and how personal satisfaction reflects organizational integration and cohesion.

From the overview above, individuals in different organizational roles, with their distinct motivations and modes of engagement, are to be understood as a particularly dynamic resource, which renders analyses of change over time of central importance. This chapter contributes to the existing literature by discussing the evolution of human resources in Polish civil society over the past 40 years. Rather than regarding human resources as a static phenomenon, it focuses on the change processes that go beyond a mere description of activists, members, volunteers, employees, etc. as proponents of particular ideas or defenders of certain vulnerable groups and treats them as organizational assets. To document the evolving nature of civic activism, selected outcomes from the research conducted among aid professionals¹ are presented (Chimiak, 2016) and discussed in the context of other relevant studies, including the most recent analyses of developments referring specifically to human resources in civil society in Poland.

Dynamics of Changes in Polish Civil Society

When Poles were granted the freedom to associate in 1989, a broad variety of organizational forms emerged, including associations, foundations, trade unions, political parties, local self-governments, professional organizations, economic and vocational self-governments, sport clubs, religious organizations, and social movements (Klon/Jawor, 2016). These attracted individuals in various capacities: as members and participants, occasional volunteers and day-to-day activists, philanthropists, and those who dedicate their time. Ten years after the beginning of the post-socialist reforms, 24% of Poles were found to have been engaged in at least one civil society organization, whereas in 2018 this proportion had increased to 40% (CBOS, 2018, p. 4). According to a more recent survey conducted by the Polish civil society organization Klon/Jawor, which also administers an online database of civil society organizations in the country, an unchanged 20% of Poles have volunteered for an association or a foundation since 2012 (Klon/Jawor, 2016, p. 24). An increase has been observed in the share of organizations working with volunteers; at present, 63% do so, while 37% rely on remunerated engagement (Klon/Jawor, 2018, p. 22).

Despite the growing share of volunteer engagement, overall levels of membership and active participation are declining. In 2001, a mere 4.1% of Poles declared that they belonged to an association or a foundation (Dąbrowska & Wygnański, 2001), and only one-third of members were actually actively involved in the work of the organization (Klon/Jawor, 2018). As in many parts of the world, the “shrinking” of the membership base of Polish civil society organizations has been proceeding for years (*ibid.*, p. 24; cf. Papakostas, 2011). The most recent Klon/Jawor survey uncovered another troubling trend: although the need to secure financial resources for organizations remains the most pressing problem identified by these entities, issues related to human resources have also surfaced. These include a lack of newcomers, difficulties retaining volunteers and paid staff, and burnout among leaders (*ibid.*, p. 65). A comparison between institutionalized and uninstitutionalized civic involvement found that 17% and 16% of Poles, respectively, had taken part in those

two types of organizing (Pazderski & Walczak, 2015). Interestingly, 60% of activists in informal initiatives have never been engaged in formal civil society organizations. As far as gender divisions are concerned, the observation that “men do the representation and women do the toiling” in Polish civil society (Institute of Public Affairs, 2012) still holds true.

To understand the context of contemporary Poland, it is important to consider the legacy of the intelligentsia and the continuing relevance of its ethos for modern-day civil society organizations. The intelligentsia is regarded as a social stratum traditionally characterized by a missionary zeal to enlighten the nation and preserve national values, especially in times of foreign rule.² In Poland, the intelligentsia was believed to come from the impoverished noble class (*szlachta*), and its emergence as a separate class or group was thought to have been a side effect of capitalism (Chałasiński, 1946). The continuing relevance of the intelligentsia's ethos for formal *and* informal social activism in Poland has been documented in recent studies (Bilewicz, 2015). In addition, the contributions of workers, leftist intellectuals (Gawin, 2008), women's rights activists (Dzido, 2016), and members of the Catholic Church (Wandycz, 1995, pp. 382–383) have been recognized in discussions of the development of grassroots activism during state socialism in Poland (1945–1989). Even artistic collectives such as the Academy of Movement (*Akademia Ruchu*) in the 1970s and the Orange Alternative (*Pomarańczowa Alternatywa*) in Wrocław in the 1980s criticized the totalitarian regime with impunity, thus acting as safety valves for the expression of citizens' discontent.

The multitude of actors engaged in grassroots activism in the totalitarian state notwithstanding, it is the social movement and trade union Solidarity of the 1980s, unprecedented in its scope and unparalleled elsewhere in Europe, that should be credited with developing a civil society narrative that was both indigenous to Poland and influential abroad while mobilizing an impressive amount of human resources. International commentators have observed that left-wing intellectuals such as Adam Michnik “resurrected the language of civil society” (Howell & Lind, 2009, pp. 31–32). Importantly, the ethos of Solidarity in the 1980s was argued to be characterized by strong communal features:

The Solidarity ethos drew on elements of Polish culture, both popular and intellectual. This included Christian theology and the philosophy of Polish Romanticism. [A] strong emphasis was placed on sacrifice and the devotion to human values. (Wesołowski, 1995, p. 113)

In the 1990s, when new political, social, and economic interests came to the fore, this ethos was considered to have become “inappropriate” and “counter-productive” (ibid.). The modern Polish intelligentsia has been developing a new, “modified” ethos, the most salient elements of which have been the adherence to “freedom, individualism, self-reliance and responsibility for oneself” (Kurczewska, 1998, p. 343). As a result, a gradual shift from the socialized idea of civil society toward the more limited classical notion, which lays emphasis on the rule of law, political citizenship, and the freedom of economic enterprise, took place after the toppling of the socialist regime. The discussion and analysis in this chapter are therefore organized around three broad changes in human resources in Polish civil society since the 1990s that comprise the development of the current individualistic, “modified” ethos of civil society in Poland.

Foreign Aid and the Individualization of Polish Civil Society

The early 1990s’ avalanche-like increase in numbers of newly established civil society organizations was facilitated by foreign assistance targeting civil society organizations. After all, stereotypes of Eastern Europe as “prone to anticivilizational tendencies, and, [sic!] always in need of developmental attention from the West” (Boyer, 2010, p. 26) have continued to dominate both discourse on and policy concerning the entire region. During this period, the prevailing assumption was that social capital was crucial for newly democratized countries’ development and economic growth (Grootaert, 1998) as well as for the emergence of their civil societies (Fox, 1996). It was institutionalized civic engagement and institutionalized cooperation that donors considered vital: “Formal networks—the organizations and associations that comprise civil society—are the key to creating the vibrant associational life needed to

produce more inclusive social capital” (National Human Development Report, 2009, p. 10).

In addition to the most palpable aspect of foreign aid—that is, the financial aspect—its educational, cultural, and political effects on human resources in civil society have likewise been acknowledged (Gliński, 2006, p. 32). The technical support provided by U.S., British, French, Swedish, and German funders brought about a change in the civic mode of action: Polish activists had to start thinking and planning in terms of projects. Equally important has been the adoption of new norms triggered by this new language and found in ways of thinking about social activism, methods of assessment, and modes of work employed by civil society activists after 1989 (Iłowiecka-Tańska, 2011, p. 123). The changes in the numbers and in the mode of functioning of Polish civil society organizations were accompanied by an evolution of their activists’ work ethos. The communitarian values characterizing self-organization before the toppling of the previous political regime gradually came to be replaced by a new set of traits. Patriotic and religious values, along with the positivist ethos of the intelligentsia, provided the motives for social activism in Poland in the early 1990s; Koralewicz and Malewska-Peyre (1998) found civil society activists to be creative, independent, and self-reliant innovators.

A decade after the beginning of the post-socialist transformation, the previously predominant, indigenous “social activist” type gradually shifted into a new form of human resources. In my own earlier research, I found that the variety of individuals who populated Poland’s civil society not only were driven by different motivations and exhibited various personalities, but also arrived to their organizations via different life trajectories (Chimiak, 2006). However, among those motivations, personalities, and life histories, I saw no conformity to the stereotype of the social activist as a person embodying a purely altruistic or purely positivist, intelligentsia-type attitude toward other people. The study suggested that the associational model of societal self-organization had been in the process of ousting the previously predominant communitarian pattern. Polish activists began to personify the civil society’s liberal, individualistic vision, which embodies individual entrepreneurship rather than common undertakings.

In the same study, I conducted an analysis of the motivations of Polish civil society activists and identified ten different types of motivations: *intrinsic* (self-actualization), *axiological* (mission), *extrinsic* (socializing), *rational* (acquisition of skills and knowledge), *allocentric* (altruism), and *power-related* (prestige) as well as *frustration* (solving personal problems), *striving after change*, *having an agenda*, and the *availability of free time* (ibid.). Intrinsic and axiological motivations proved to be the most typical among Polish civic activists, whereas power-related and allocentric motivations were least illustrative of pro-social commitment. One decade after the beginning of the post-socialist transformation, civic activism was inspired by a mixture of personal (or ideological) and functional aims. Participation in civil society organizations enabled activists to fulfill their personal needs while contributing to the augmentation of the common good. Indeed, these qualities are best described as individualistic. The go-ahead attitude, optimism, mobility, and the “will to attain success via one’s own effort” paired well with these individualists’ work on behalf of other people (Domański & Dukaczewska, 1997, p. 355).

Hence, the “gradual maturation and professionalization” (Gliński, 1999) that these human resources underwent during the 1990s were accompanied by a transition from communitarianism to individualism in the corps of civil society organizations (Chimiak, 2006). The emergence of “a new type of active but nonpolitical participation” (Rychard, 1998, p. 31) was concomitantly observed. Indeed, the finding that communitarian values gradually became obsolete could also be explained by the fact that, whereas mass social movements had previously stood for civil society organizing, after 1989 this approach was understood as no longer necessary.

Polish Aid and Donor-Induced Changes in Norms and Practices

Whereas the main concern of civic activists of the 1980s and early 1990s was the Polish people (Koralewicz & Malewska-Peyre, 1998), Polish activism gradually acquired transnational characteristics after the toppling of the socialist regime; civil society organizations began to extend

humanitarian aid to other countries and, over time, to engage in democratization assistance to nations east of Poland, development cooperation with countries from the Global South, and global education at home (Chimiak, 2016). Poland's own development cooperation program, Polish Aid, was established in 2004 (when Poland joined the EU) to provide development assistance, humanitarian aid, and global education, and it relies heavily on civil society's human resources to share their expertise. Some leading activists became employed by the governmental institutions involved in the realization of this program and were instrumental in devising and adopting the legal framework of the Polish development cooperation system. Polish civil society organizations were the first in Eastern Europe to advocate for issues in some areas, such as the promotion of women's and children's rights and engagement in development cooperation.

Once again, it was individuals (and not demand for organizational activities) that were seminal in the emergence and evolution of internationalized Polish civil society organizations (*ibid.*). As noted by a representative of the Foreign Ministry whom I interviewed in 2015:

The most important factor [that facilitated the engagement of Polish civil society organizations abroad] has been people, [...] people who understood that Poland should start providing development cooperation. (*ibid.*, p. 202)

Individuals like Janina Ochojska, founder and president of Polish Humanitarian Action and a lifelong democracy activist, constitute the hallmark of Polish development cooperation (Zalas-Kamińska, 2013, p. 172). Interestingly, intrinsic motivation is typical for aid professionals. As expressed by a respondent who joined organizations providing humanitarian assistance during the war in the former Yugoslavia and worked in a civil society organization cooperating with Ukraine, "I think that by doing development, I fulfill myself as a person." Yet, in addition to this striving for self-actualization, an exploratory worldview and an interest in particular regions or in the wider world are also elements of the attitude that global activists share. The following quotations from an aid professional working in a think tank and two others engaged in Eastern

Partnership countries and African countries, respectively, illustrate this point well: “This is what interests me: the wider world.” “I was always interested in what lies to the east of Poland. I felt it hasn’t been well described, well understood.” “I was always interested in Africa.”

Self-actualization and the achievement of competence coupled with an exploratory worldview, openness to other cultures, and impact-orientedness thus emerged as the most typical motivations of aid professionals engaged in developmental civil society organizations (Chimiak, 2016). Theirs is a constructive and well-informed reaction to global problems. As such, the emergence of a well-defined cohort of Polish aid professionals reflects the evolution of human resources in Polish civil society organizations. However, along with this development, other changes began to manifest themselves as some social activists challenged the dominance of the post-1989 civil society.

Adverse Practices: The Backlash to the Institutionalization of Polish Civil Society

In more recent years, a new generation of social activists began to contest mature organizations, viewing the “NGO-ization” of civil society and its alleged estrangement from the grassroots in negative terms (Jacobsson, 2015). Some of these new-generation activists opted to join or establish informal initiatives as these had come to be perceived as less bureaucratized, financially unburdened, and more trustworthy than institutionalized civil society organizations (Pazderski & Walczak, 2015, p. 158). Thus, one can observe the emergence of a hybrid model of self-organization beginning in 2008, evidenced in the rise of uninstitutionalized civic initiatives (Herbst & Żakowska, 2013). The human resources of these informal initiatives were found to revive some of the communitarian features of civil society activism (see also Domaradzka, Chap. 6 in this volume). Theirs is, however, an in-group communitarianism and is related to extrinsic motivation. Tellingly, the need to socialize is more characteristic of women than of men. This in-group communitarianism has been observed to develop, for example, in food cooperatives (Bilewicz & Potkańska, 2013).

The argument that civil activism as such is in crisis has also been counteracted by an incremental literature on other new models of civic engagement in the region. Reportedly, a new democratic revolution has been taking place, “digital and contestatory” in nature and carried out with indignation, internet, and imagination (Krasteva, 2016; cf. Domaradzka, Chap. 6 in this volume). These processes have recently been studied through the example of the proliferation of civic journalism in Poland. Since 2005, grassroots local websites have been established and run by residents of numerous small towns and villages to monitor local politics and encourage citizens to take active part in the public sphere. These developments testify to the contention that the “internet emerged as a space for civic participation” where citizens “make the new world familiar to themselves” (Chmielewska-Szlajfer, 2019, pp. 125 and 182).

The dominance of institutionalized civil society activism has furthermore been challenged by the precarization of work. This process has been especially palpable in creative industries such as journalism, academia, and civil society organizations. In the case of civil society, the precariat and the projectariat³ are known to be commonplace. Another threat comes from the finding that Poles with higher educational levels and in precarious jobs tend to become *less* engaged in public matters due to their job instability (Kiersztyn, 2017). This tendency suggests that, should current trends in the labor market persist, precarity may eventually turn out to be a greater threat to human resources than the infamous post-socialist reticence about civic engagement (*ibid.*, p. 224).

Another specificity of organizing has been argued to be the voluntary “self-exploitation” (Kuźmiński et al., 2018, p. 15) of many activists. Sociologist Adriana Bratnik opined that modern Polish civil society is not substantially different from “a grange from the Middle Ages” (Bratnik in *ibid.*, p. 16), requiring a broad variety of skills as well as an exclusive and intensive commitment similar to that of a feudal monastic agricultural community. The neoliberal practices that enhanced the changes in the work mode of Polish civil society organizations and also contributed to the obsolescence of inclusive communitarian values eventually rendered the organizations vulnerable workplaces. The fact that another nefarious practice—sexual harassment—recently surfaced in international civil society affirms this contention (Jóźwiak, 2018). The coming out of abuse

victims is indicative of the dark side of what would otherwise be considered the strengths of civil society organizations: their human resources and the legitimacy of their claim to moral authority (Hall & Biersteker, 2002). The neoliberal model of management of human resources, which places undue emphasis on efficacy and visibility and was enthusiastically and uncritically internalized in Poland and other post-socialist countries in the 1990s, is considered the source of the current incidence of emotional abuse in Polish civil society organizations (Jóźwiak, 2018).

Civil society organizations have therefore begun to face allegations regarding the recurring practice of mobbing. Civil society as a whole has reportedly continuously overlooked the implications of power relations within its ranks, remaining under the “illusion [that it represents a] community of goals and mission” (Świetlik in Kuźmiński et al., 2018, p. 14). Anthropologist and whistle-blower Maria Świetlik, who exposed the lack of respect for female security workers’ rights at (ironically) the Women’s Congress in Poland in 2018, argued that mobbing is a much more common issue in civil society organizations than is openly acknowledged. She maintained that, irrespective of the field of activity of an organization, the practice of psychological abuse is a structural problem in the sector exacerbated by the fact that its victims, mission-propelled individuals, acquiesce to mobbing and precarity for the sake of the mission and the image of their organization (Nie tylko ks. Stryczek..., 2018). The bullied activists’ approach is a noble yet potentially dangerous one as it reinforces a status quo in which the leader, considered the civil society organization’s most valuable asset, becomes a trademark to be protected at all costs.

With the raising of critical voices on the plague of reprehensible practices—both from inside and outside civil society organizations—the Pandora’s box of publicly shared, critical discussion of the sector’s sins has been opened. In 2018, the opinion section of the Klon/Jawor-run internet portal ngo.pl published a number of articles regarding previously disregarded or overlooked issues ailing civil society organizations, which have namely been accused of generational fossilization (Batko-Tołuć, 2018) caused by older activists’ alleged paternalism (Duriasz-Bułhak, 2018). Others have argued that the still-dominant visionary leadership model has become counterproductive and should be replaced with open and inclusive leadership (Urbanik, 2018). Given the allegedly weak

human resources management skills of many leaders (Bartnik in Kuźmiński et al., 2018, p. 16), it seems justified to appeal to the younger generation to develop its own organizational culture *and* identity rather than looking up to current leaders. This is not to say that young Poles have not already taken different routes of civic engagement than previous generations.

Regional Findings, Global Implications

Before rushing to conclusions regarding the state of civil society and its human resources in post-socialist Poland, one must analyze national and regional developments against the global context. Specifically, it should be remembered that, due to the spread of the human rights-based approach to development, many civil society organizations *worldwide* are engaged with democratization and aim at influencing policy in that direction. As a result, what the Carnegie Foundation called a “viral-like spread of new laws” has begun to restrict foreign funding for domestic organizations in many countries around the world (Carothers & Brechenmacher, 2014, p. 1), thus exacerbating the side effects of the post-9/11 backlash against civil society (Howell et al., 2006). In Poland, this backlash caught civil society organizations by surprise. The previous focus on professionalization rested on the assumption that all people engaged in civil society could cooperate constructively despite ideological differences. Yet the civil society firmly believed in its founding myth of “aideologism” (Jeziarska, 2018) from the beginning of the transformation until these organizations were suddenly told that their aideologism was fully ideological and exclusionary by virtue of being “liberal, progressive” as opposed to “conservative, patriotic” (Frączak, 2016).

Indeed, activists’ tendency to seek compromise and dialogue rather than cooptation and confrontation turned out to be yet another foundational myth of the institutionalized civil society. Some organizations in post-socialist Europe have recently declared that liberal values were externally supported and therefore not indigenous. Representatives of the Polish “conservative community” have claimed to have been denied the opportunity to impact policies because of the “conservative, patriotic”

values they promote (Gosiewska, 2016). Remarkably, in a study of “conservative and patriotic” organizations, no empirical proof was found as to the alleged preferential treatment of “leftist, liberal” organizations applying for public funds (Krygiel, 2015, pp. 18–19). The backlash against organizations reportedly promoting liberal, leftist views does not, then, rest solely on the argument that these values were externally supported. Aideological values came to be contested on the grounds of being liberal. It was mostly organizations identified as promoting exported values that bore the brunt of the backlash, for example in Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, and the Western Balkans (see also discussions of the backlash in Russia in chapters by Bederson and Semenov, Lukinmaa, and Skokova and Fröhlich in this volume).

In Poland, the consequences of these global developments were reinforced by the coming to power of a political party which—unlike predecessors who had allegedly been “at the very least uninvolved” (Gliński, 2006, p. 32) in supporting the then fledgling civil society—devised a decidedly pro-active or interventionist policy toward it. This policy, implemented by the National Freedom Institute—Centre for the Development of Civil Society, established in 2017, has been contested by some organizations⁴ and welcomed by others, especially those that have previously felt themselves omitted in the distribution of public funds.

A study of watchdog organizations’ reactions to the new legal environment has found that, unlike in Hungary, where specific civil society organizations have been targeted, the focus in Poland has been on “dividing the civil society and marginalizing the NGOs who are not in favour of the government” (Szuleka, 2018, p. 18). Also unlike the situation in Hungary, restrictions on access to financing for Polish civil society organizations were not found to have been systemic. These organizations therefore decided to “rethink their methods of work and adjust to the new reality” and “join their forces” (*ibid.*, p. 20). Polish and Hungarian activists, furthermore, became involved in previously neglected activities such as developing strategies for direct fundraising, enhancing their engagement with their constituencies, and becoming more active at the EU and Council of Europe levels. In other words, advocacy organizations have used the adverse political circumstances constructively while also compensating for their previous lack of attention to certain activities.

These efforts appear to have been successful, as trust in Polish civil society organizations has increased since 2017 (Gumkowska, 2018). Polish society particularly respects its organizations' work on behalf of the disadvantaged, their watchdog activities, and their ability to strengthen the community (*ibid.*).

What can be determined from examining the transformation of and challenges to the human capital accumulated thus far in civic activism in Poland? In spite of the indubitable diversification of organizing, it continues to evolve while facing and overcoming various threats. The scarcity of financial resources, which appears to be an inherent issue among civil society organizations, as well as the recent challenges posed by interventionist state policies and civil society's ethical problems as described above, have all impacted their human resources. However, as this chapter has endeavored to demonstrate, civil society activists compensate for what they may lack in other resources with resourcefulness, learning, and commitment. Charles Handy's seemingly obvious statement that "organizations are people" (Handy, 1998, p. 25) continues to hold true. In other words, people as resources are definitely one of the strengths of Polish civil society.

Notes

1. In 2014–2015, I conducted 25 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with aid professionals engaged in development cooperation on behalf of either a civil society organization or a relevant governmental institution. With the exception of one respondent, all interviewees—including those who at the moment of the interview worked for governmental or foreign institutions—had been engaged with a civil society organization. The cross-case technique (Huberman & Miles, 1994) was applied to analyze the interviews with these aid professionals.
2. Until 1918, Poland did not exist as an independent state as it was partitioned for 123 years among the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Prussian Empires.
3. "Projectariat" is a distinct type of "precariat." Projectariats engaged in civil society organizations face job insecurity and low remuneration.

4. National Freedom Institute Act: Helsinki Committee in Poland issues statement. <http://www.hfhr.pl/en/national-freedom-institute-act-helsinki-committee-in-poland-issues-statement/>. Accessed 06 December 2018.

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Part III

**Organizations and Resources:
Intertwined Transformations**



10

Doing the Right Things or Doing Things Right? Exploring the Relationship Between Professional Autonomy and Resources in Volunteering

Cecilia Gullberg and Noomi Weinryb

[I]t is super important to spread spread information about their [refugees'] rights in the county care [public health care system] and not to establish a field hospital just because one wants to feel like Che Guevara. Sorry, but anything can happen to the refugees if you make a mistake! They have rights just like us. Right now I try personally to find a balance between encouraging relief efforts—amazing that people want to help—and to ensure that patient safety is secured. (NN33, medical doctor volunteer in a Facebook conversation, Stockholm, 19 September 2015)

This chapter draws on a Swedish case of civil society organizing aimed at health care provision for refugees during the autumn of 2015. During that time, various civil society health care initiatives emerged to meet the needs of the unprecedented numbers of refugees arriving in Sweden. Although undocumented refugees were entitled to care in the public health care

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system, civil society initiatives played an important role in providing swift and flexible care to people who were transiting through Sweden on their way to other countries. Many of these initiatives were organized through social media, primarily Facebook. In this chapter, we examine the shift of a group of medical volunteers moving from highly ad hoc and autonomous organizing to an increasingly bureaucratized structure under the aegis of established civil society organizations. In so doing, we draw attention to the various resources used by these professionals that both enabled and constrained their autonomy in different organizational contexts.

Our study ties into two major trends in the organization of civil society. In the context of medical volunteering in Swedish civil society, these transitions may be viewed as reshaping the conditions under which autonomy can be maintained and resources acquired and used. Firstly, from a Swedish perspective, this chapter relates to the increased plurality of welfare service delivery, enabled through what has been described as a shift from government to governance (Pierre & Peters, 2000; Rhodes, 2000). As part of the proliferation of New Public Management in Sweden, private actors, among them civil society organizations, have been able to provide state-funded welfare services (Dahlberg, 2005; Hasselbladh et al., 2008; Johansson et al., 2015). As public funding permits the state to specify the manner in which welfare services are to be delivered, it may also be viewed as hampering the independence of participating civil society organizations. These developments can be interpreted as a managerialist turn in civil society (Maier et al., 2014), a standardization and formalization of volunteer medical practice and participating civil society actors which may weaken autonomy while potentially providing access to novel resources as well.

Secondly, this study analyzes the complex phenomenon of ad hoc organizing via social media, where established norms for formal civil society organizing are abandoned for the benefit of loosely organized networks (Kaun & Uldam, 2018; Turunen & Weinryb, 2019). This trend can be perceived as contradictory to the formalization of civil society organizations as a forum for state-funded service delivery. Rather than relying on external resources, organizing through social media often builds on the resources pooled by the participating actors (Weinryb et al., 2019), in this

case, medical professionals. This loose form of coordination is yet another aspect that creates novel conditions for autonomy and resource acquisition, which is relevant for the analysis of the case at hand.

By bringing together these two trends—formalization of state-funded private welfare service delivery on one hand and individualized, loosely organized networks with pooled and uncoordinated resources on the other—our study provides fertile ground for understanding how autonomy and the use of resources unfold and interact. As we focus on medical professionals, their specific professional autonomy becomes a focal point where these two trends intersect and present dilemmas on the use of resources in contemporary civil society organizing.

Autonomy and Resource Dependence for Professionals

Theoretically, this chapter centers on the tension between professional autonomy and resource dependence. The study of professions is a classical focus of organization studies, where professional norms serve as a prism and as a driver of various organizational changes (Abbott, 2014; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). A central element of professions is autonomy, meaning that professional norms and the adherence to these are primarily negotiated and controlled within the profession (Engel, 1969, 1970; Hall, 1968) rather than by “consumers and managers” (Freidson, 2001, p. 12). The medical profession is typically considered a “classical profession” with a high degree of autonomy and less susceptibility to external influences than many other professions (Brante, 1988; Freidson, 1988). In essence, medical professionals can be expected to practice their profession in a reasonably similar way regardless of organizational circumstances, for example, whether they are remunerated or not.

However, according to resource dependence theory, organizations are always dependent on their environments, which perpetually threatens this autonomous status (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Organizations are dependent primarily on resources for their survival, and this dependence

is contingent on an organization's interaction with its environment (*ibid.*). As professionals often practice their professions in an organizational context, situations entailing various resource dependencies may constrain their autonomy.

As resource dependence theory does give individual agents some degree of agency (see, for example, Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978) discussion of the role of managers), it is a conundrum to discern how professionals may use resources to maintain autonomy while facing environmental constraints. Previous research has shown that the organizational context is key to understanding the impediments to and possibilities for autonomy. As Hall (1968) stated:

The strong drive for autonomy on the part of a professional may come into direct conflict with organizationally based job requirements. At the same time, the organization may be threatened by strong professional desires on the part of at least some of its members. (pp. 102–103)

Given the tension between professional autonomy and organizational context, this chapter contributes to the existing research by comparatively exploring two contexts with different environmental constraints, focusing on the ways in which autonomy and resource usage unfold and interact. As described above, civil society organizing is currently undergoing two major changes that may reshape the possibilities for maintaining autonomy and for acquiring and using resources. We argue that a strong profession is particularly interesting to study in this context as we can expect there to be well-established norms that influence professionals' perceptions of resources and environmental constraints. Despite the fact that autonomy research dates back many decades within the field of organizational research (Engel, 1969, 1970; Hall, 1968), little contemporary work examines the relationships between autonomy negotiations and the two trends in civil society organizing as regards resource provision.

The Empirical Case of Health Care Professionals Volunteering in the 2015 Refugee Crisis

In the fall of 2015, Sweden experienced a dramatic increase in the number of incoming refugees; at times, as many as 10,000 arrived each week. This was colloquially referred to as the 2015 refugee crisis. The influx of refugees to Sweden began in early September, as the Dublin Convention broke down, and halted almost completely by late November, when the Swedish border was closed by a bipartisan parliamentary decision. The sudden arrival of refugees gave rise to various voluntary initiatives, many organized through social media, primarily Facebook (Weinryb, 2015). Some groups were intended for those in particular professions, such as doctors, nurses, and lawyers, and focused on assisting refugees in specific matters. The group of health care personnel studied here was set up through Facebook and aimed to complement the public health care system by assisting the so-called transit refugees who were residing illegally in Sweden while on their way to other Nordic countries.

Historically, Swedish civil society has been active primarily in areas outside of the core functions of the welfare state, such as health care provision and social services (Amnå, 2006; Wijkström, 2004); it has traditionally focused on the areas of sports, culture, and recreation, as well as funding research and engaging in adult education and political voice (Lundström & Wijkström, 1995). Yet, as the Swedish welfare state has increasingly come to incorporate private welfare providers through different forms of public procurement, civil society has become more engaged in welfare service delivery (Johansson et al., 2015; Lundström & Wijkström, 2012). These civil society welfare providers have overwhelmingly been paid for, or at least subsidized, by public funds. Until July 1, 2013, however, some populations were not eligible for welfare services delivered by the public system; undocumented immigrants were among them. Until that point in time, health care for these immigrants was primarily provided by volunteering health care personnel. However, since July 1, 2013, undocumented adults have been eligible for non-deferrable public health care services, including various forms of obstetrics and

gynecology care and dental care (SFS, 2013, p. 407); undocumented minors are eligible for all types of public health care services, not only immediate care (Vårdguiden, 2019).

Given the 2013 law, the role of volunteering health care personnel has gradually become less relevant. In 2015, however, the sudden influx of refugees put a serious strain on public administration, recreating a perceived need for volunteer health care initiatives (Turunen & Weinryb, 2017). The group studied in this chapter was initially run and staffed entirely by volunteering health care professionals relying heavily on Facebook for organizing. An underlying premise of this volunteer-based health care provision was that the autonomy of the health care personnel was almost absolute. However, the autonomous initiative was subsequently organized under the aegis of two established civil society organizations supported by public funds to temporarily provide these services. These established civil society organizations were neither specifically nor solely focused on health care provision and did not have the professional mandate on which the independent initiative had been based. It is this transfer, from linking professionals primarily through a free-floating online forum to being bound by an established organizational setting, that is the comparative focus of this chapter.

Theoretical Framework

Previous research has shed some light on professional autonomy and bureaucratic organizational constraints, although it has not focused specifically on the tension between resource dependence and autonomy. In one of the classics in this field, Engel (1969) argued:

[T]he limiting administrative structure of the bureaucracy restricts the professional's freedom and makes him dependent on the organization which, in turn, controls him and inhibits the application of his knowledge and skills. His association with a bureaucratic organization could therefore prevent the professional from fulfilling a fundamental requisite of professional behavior—serving the best interests of his clients. (Engel, 1969, p. 30)

The limiting role of the organization has also been described as rendering the “professional conception [...] challenged and transformed by the requirements of the bureaucratic setting” (Sorensen & Sorensen, 1974, p. 105). However, other studies have shown that professional and organizational commitments can be compatible under certain conditions. For instance, Thornton (1970) demonstrated that the compatibility of two such commitments depends on the extent to which professionals experience and perceive “an organizational situation as reaffirming and exemplifying certain principles of professionalism” (p. 424).

This view has also been supported by studies highlighting the fact that organizationally generated normative systems do not necessarily restrict professionals in their self-regulatory activity (Hall, 1967). In addition, if the profession is dependent on a logistical infrastructure to practice that profession, as in the case of most health care provision (e.g. authorization to prescribe drugs, access to medical equipment, a formal journal system, etc.), it is no longer solely within the purview of the individual professional or group of professionals to establish the very organizational setting in which the autonomy of the profession could be practiced (cf. Engel, 1970). The results of studies investigating the conflict between organizational contingencies and professional autonomy have thus been contradictory to some extent. Nevertheless, they have all centered around one particular argument: the degree of professional autonomy in relation to bureaucracy depends on each particular context. This is in line with ideas regarding resource dependence as contingent on environmental conditions.

An ideal-type way to distinguish between different environmental conditions is to compare a context in which bureaucratic structures are predominant to a context in which professionals are essentially steering themselves. Scott (1965) termed such ideal-type organizational settings *heteronomous* and *autonomous*. A heteronomous organization is described by Scott as one in which

professional employees are clearly subordinated to an administrative framework, and the amount of autonomy granted professional employees is relatively small. An elaborate set of rules and a system of routine supervision controls many if not most aspects of the tasks performed by professional employees, so that it is often difficult if not impossible to locate or define an arena of activity for which the professional group is responsible individually or collectively. (Scott, 1965, p. 67)

A heteronomous setting may be seen as a proxy for the first trend described above, according to which Swedish civil society actors become formalized and standardized given their dependence on the state for the funding of their welfare service delivery. In contrast, in the autonomous case,

organizational officials delegate to the group of professional employees considerable responsibility for defining and implementing the goals, for setting performance standards, and for seeing to it that standards are maintained. [...] Individual professionals are expected to be highly skilled and motivated and to have internalized professional norms so that little external surveillance is required. If necessary, however, formal or informal sanctions may be applied by the colleague group. (Scott, 1965, p. 66)

An autonomous setting may be seen as a proxy for the second trend described above, according to which professionals pool resources with the help of a digital initiative. In the design of our study, we followed these ideal types to distinguish between two contexts with different environmental constraints that may influence resource usage and professional autonomy. Given recent trends in civil society engagement in the delivery of welfare services (Dahlberg, 2005; Hasselbladh et al., 2008; Johansson et al., 2015; Turunen & Weinryb, 2019), we tied our study to the realm of health care, a classical focus of profession research (Freidson, 1988), as well as to the volunteering context. We thereby suggest that volunteering medical professionals acquire and use resources differently in autonomous and heteronomous organizational settings.

Research Design, Data, and Methods

As stated above, this chapter studies a group of health care professionals that organized to voluntarily help refugees arriving in Stockholm in the fall of 2015. The health care provision took place in temporary venues, yet much of the organizing was accomplished via a Facebook page rather than at the venues themselves. That page, covering the period from September 16 to December 2, 2015, constitutes the main basis for our analysis of resource usage and autonomy negotiation. During this period, the health care professionals interacted on a daily basis about issues pertaining to staffing, medical supplies, and work practices. We view these interactions, in which professionals discuss and negotiate different resources in their work, as an expression of how they interpreted their degree of autonomy as well as the influence of environmental constraints. Web archiving is increasingly recognized as a useful approach to systematically acquiring a fine-grained and chronological understanding of a phenomenon (Lomborg, 2012).

The professionals in the group were all self-identified as health care personnel, and only occasionally, predominantly when signing up for scheduled slots, did they state their specific professions (typically doctor or nurse). The criterion for inclusion in the group was thus self-identification as belonging to the professional group of “health care personnel.” At the end of our period of study, this group had 1344 members (including one of the authors). The Facebook group we studied was closed but not secret. The author who was part of the group clicked open all comments that were posted during the period. The material consists of 231 pages in PDF. This entire sequence was important in the analytical work, as its longitudinal nature provided a rich understanding of the case at hand and thus allowed us to obtain a full understanding of the development of the group.

Group administrators granted us permission to use the data. In addition to working with the dataset, we triangulated our key findings by interviewing two health care personnel who were active in the Facebook group, one of whom had a leading role; we were also granted permission by the participants to partake in another online conversation that

informed our contextual understanding of the case studied here. This online conversation was conducted during the same time period by volunteer health care professionals, some of whom were involved in the initiative studied here, which was discussed at length.

The distinction between autonomous and heteronomous organizations allowed us to analytically distinguish between our two cases and to explore them comparatively. Our dataset may be viewed as the result of a natural experiment of professionals encountering a heteronomous organization after a period of organizing in an autonomous context. The group we studied was created on September 16, 2015, by health care personnel who had not been previously coordinated. On October 2, the autonomous organizing was moved to new transit housing, where the provision of health care was run jointly by two heteronomous host organizations (Organizations A and B), neither of which was focused solely or specifically on health care delivery. Both of the established civil society organizations had been contracted by the municipality. In the abovementioned PDF document, 107 pages recorded the initial organizing, which took place between September 16 and October 2. The remaining 124 pages chronicle the organizing after Organization A and Organization B became involved in the health care provision. We coded the first period of organizing as T1. The second period, T2, began when the Facebook group reorganized under the aegis of Organization A and Organization B. In this study, we view the period of the first organizational context, T1, as an autonomous organizational setting and the second context, during T2, as a heteronomous organizational setting. Our labelling of T1 as a period of autonomous organization is intended to contrast with the cooperation with Organization A and Organization B, which were not managed specifically by health care personnel. T1 took place at a venue called *The Club*, and T2 took place at venue called *The School*.

In our analysis of the data, we performed qualitative content analysis using NVivo (Kohlbacher, 2006; Saldaña, 2012) to compare how professionals discussed resources in the two periods. All data were initially coded separately by the two authors, and the codes and interpretations were subsequently developed and corroborated.

Comparing Autonomous and Heteronomous Organizational Settings

Resources and Professional Autonomy in the Autonomous Organizational Setting

In the autonomous organizational setting, there were essentially no organizational officials delegating responsibility to the professionals (cf. Scott, 1965); rather, the health care volunteers themselves constituted the organizational setting. No one was formally in charge, and everyone was free to take the initiative. Although two individuals were particularly active in highlighting the need for additional volunteers during certain hours or on certain days and in answering questions from first-time volunteers, there were no signs that their engagement was based on formal appointment. The schedule, in Excel format, was available for everyone in the Facebook group to read and fill in. Similarly, various volunteers reported on shortages of material resources, such as drugs and medical equipment, by publishing posts in the group. Supplies were sometimes paid for by the individual volunteers and sometimes provided by the volunteers' respective workplaces. Various first-time volunteers raised the question of whether they should verify their medical degrees before beginning their work, but the practice was that while awaiting guidelines from the National Board of Health and Welfare, everyone was responsible for working within their own area of competence. Though it was decided at some point (it is unclear when and by whom) that volunteers then undergoing schooling to obtain their degrees were not to work on their own, there was no oversight to confirm that this direction was being followed. On some occasions, for practical reasons, volunteers took their children with them to The Club. Some volunteers first posed a question about doing so in the Facebook group, and some of the more active volunteers responded by stating: "You are not the first to do so." As compared to practices of health care provision in established contexts, then, this organizational setting was characterized by a large degree of autonomy in the acquisition and use of human and material resources. There was, however, also a demand for norms and for guidelines as to how to use some

of these resources. Several first-time volunteers requested introductory guidelines or asked to work together with more experienced volunteers. With time, questions also arose in the Facebook group concerning, for instance, how to use drugs and other medical supplies, or when to refer refugees to the established Swedish health care system instead of providing care at The Club. Norms and guidelines thus emerged as an important resource in addition to the more tangible human and material resources. These intangible resources were acquired in somewhat varying ways, as illustrated below.

One example concerns the medical examination of small children. One day, a volunteer published a post in the Facebook group asking for equipment to measure blood pressure in small children. This request was gently rebuffed by another volunteer, who referred to *Pediatric Early Warning System* (PEWS) as a much better way to examine children, explaining that blood pressure is a rather late sign of illness in small children. The volunteer who had posted the question appeared truly thankful for this advice. Here, established professional guidelines were used as a resource for guiding work in the group. Another example concerns the treatment of colds and coughing. One of the volunteers—a medical doctor—argued that non-prescription drugs only worked as placebos. She furthermore stated that prescription drugs containing opiates had serious side effects, such as dizziness and nausea, that had already affected some of the volunteers' patients. Although the entire conversation sprung from one volunteer's questioning of other volunteers' administering of certain drugs as inappropriate, the critical volunteer emphasized that she was not finding fault with the work of her colleagues. Rather, she framed her criticism as a sharing of thoughts in order to improve routines for the benefit of the patients. Unlike the example of the conversation about examining small children, no established guidelines were referred to in these posts, but the advice appears to have been received as useful and was gladly accepted without conflict, possibly because the question fell rather clearly within the purview of medical doctors.

However, some discussions of norms and guidelines included more divergent views. These primarily concerned what we here call "boundary items." With this term, we refer to items that may be used in medical

practice as well as by laypeople in everyday life without medical consultation. Our examples are milk substitute for infants and fluid replacement for small children. In the case of milk substitute, some volunteers emphasized its benefits for mothers and babies without stable residences (as in the cases of some refugees), while others pointed out the risks that using milk substitute poses for nursing mothers. A lengthy debate ensued among a large number of volunteers on just how risky milk substitute is for nursing, whether any universal advice on the issue is actually justified, and how important the element of travel was in this discussion, given that the patients in question were refugees. In these contestations over the boundary item of milk substitute, professionals explicitly self-identified their specific professional roles (which was rare in this group) with greater frequency than in the debates on the usage of medical equipment and drugs, and they referred to these roles when legitimating their arguments. Eventually, it was suggested that the main takeaways of this debate be used in the creation of written guidelines for volunteers. In the absence of any clear consensus, other than that established practices from different medical professions offer different takes on the dilemma, it remained unclear what these guidelines should state. When the written guidelines sourced from the group conversation were offered as a solution, however, they were not contested by the debating volunteers and seemed to be accepted as guidelines created among peers.

Whereas the discussion on milk substitute primarily relates to the professional expertise of those in different types of medical professions—midwives, pediatric nurses, and pediatric doctors—the discussion on fluid replacement for small children tended toward organizational-level arguments. Like milk substitute, fluid replacement is a boundary item in terms of medical practice, but here, rather than mentioning their specific health care roles, professionals primarily referred to their “home” organizations when offering opinions as to how to best self-organize. In this case, the main debate concerned whether fluid replacement for small children should be bought readymade or cooked by the volunteers themselves. It became apparent that this practice varied in the pediatric units of different Stockholm hospitals. One volunteer argued that the benefit of the readymade replacement was its more precise dosage, whereas the

“homecooked” version was riskier as its ingredients could be mixed in the wrong proportions during preparation, which might be detrimental to the health of dehydrated young patients. However, a volunteer who was an experienced “home cooker” pointed out that error is also possible when using the readymade mix, as it must be accurately mixed with the correct amount of water.

Hence, in comparison to the norms regarding the use of drugs and equipment, the discussions surrounding norms for the use of milk substitute and fluid replacement contained more debate, possibly because they related to several areas of expertise. Nevertheless, both types of discussions were aimed at ensuring patients’ safety, and norms and guidelines were seen as resources rather than as constraints. One important explanation for this is likely the fact that these norms and guidelines were largely arrived at through peer discussions, that is, from the inside rather than from the outside, and were thus in line with the idea of professional autonomy.

In sum, in the context of autonomous organizing, the use of both human and material resources was negotiated and regulated through discussions among volunteers. Most frequently subject to discussion was the use of material resources, that is, drugs, medical equipment, and other supplies. The use of human resources was not explicitly debated to the same extent, though questions were raised (but not discussed) regarding, for instance, medical licenses. This extreme autonomy had its shortcomings as well—for instance, the volunteers often had to pay for medical supplies themselves—but few were highlighted. The norms and guidelines emerging from the discussions were typically regarded as resources rather than environmental constraints. Regardless of whether these stemmed from emergent norms (as in the case of boundary items) or more established guidelines (as in the case of medical equipment and drugs), they served to ensure patient safety and seemed to strengthen a sense of professional autonomy rather than threaten it. In essence, norms and guidelines appeared to serve to enact a form of organizing that we call “doing things right.”

Resources and Professional Autonomy in the Heteronomous Organizational Setting

As the autonomous organization of the group of health care personnel moved in under the aegis of the heteronomous organizations, the acquisition and use of resources and the conditions for doing so began to change. First of all, the heteronomous organizations ensured the stable provision of material resources, such as drugs and equipment, thus relieving the volunteers of an economic burden. Second, when filling in the schedule, volunteers were asked to indicate whether they were already licensed to practice, and they were subject to identity checks by security guards upon entering the building. Security guards also checked whether each individual was on the schedule. Human resources thus became significantly more subject to guidelines, not to say regulations, introduced by the heteronomous organizations. Professional secrecy also became regulated. Furthermore—in fact starting already during the initial period but gaining importance in the heteronomous setting—the number of hours of health care provision per day was reduced and volunteers were increasingly encouraged to fill the empty slots in the schedule instead of signing up together with other volunteers. The latter practice was, however, initiated by the volunteers themselves.

Overall, the introduction and emergence of further rules and norms was appreciated by the volunteers. As mentioned in the previous section, the verification of licenses had already been subject to discussion, and several volunteers had expressed a wish for more guidelines concerning everything from the storage of drugs to what types of health care should be referred to the public health care system. Even though the organizing of the autonomous setting did revolve around “doing things right,” there now seemed to be increasing awareness that rules, norms, and guidelines are important resources and that the absence of such resources risks putting significant strain on the human resources. One of the volunteers referred to her previous experience as a medical volunteer, underlining the importance of clearly delineating work scope and responsibilities so as to avoid overloading and stressing helpful people. Also, just as in the autonomous context, the value of rules and norms was emphasized from

the perspective of patient safety. It was pointed out that some of the practices carried out in September should never have been undertaken in the autonomous organizational setting, as some types of treatment that patients had received would have been much more safely administered in a hospital setting (in which they were eligible to be treated). Examples mentioned of this misdirected and implicitly dangerous form of medical practice were the provision of intravenous fluid to a patient as well as the provision of insulin to a diabetic.

However, as the situation in the heteronomous setting unfolded, it became clear that some of its norms and guidelines were perceived by the professionals as constraints rather than resources. Some of the volunteers seemed to view the collaboration as being primarily based on their own contributions of skills and licenses to the hosts rather than on the hosts' contribution of better organization to the volunteers' health care provision for refugees. There was indeed pride in and strong identification with the autonomous organizational setting, which in retrospect appeared highly flexible to the volunteers. Some of them used the term "gray-area health care" in laudatory terms, testifying to a perceived need to retain some amount of flexibility in their work. At the core of this contention lay a clash as to which norms should prevail when the health care professionals organized to help refugees—"doing things right" or "doing the right things"—but also how these norms should be negotiated, that is, among peers or with the external environment. As negotiations of "doing things right" increasingly took place in a larger context (the heteronomous setting), "doing things right," as elaborated below, was juxtaposed with the idea of "doing the right things."

There was an outpouring of anger when, one day, a volunteer was stopped at the entrance as they were not on the schedule for that day. Discussions arose regarding the need for a flexible schedule according to which volunteers would be permitted to appear on short notice when their regular work allowed rather than always being scheduled in advance. Volunteers were especially upset by the contrast between their will to do good and the questioning imposed by the seemingly irrelevant routines of the heteronomous host organizations. However, some volunteers continued to emphasize the safety they experienced in the routines set up by the host organizations, thus revealing tensions among the health care

professionals. Some volunteers were so angry at the host organizations that they warned of quitting volunteering altogether. It was pointed out that they were volunteering out of good will and that they were already strained by the requirements of their paid regular jobs, implying that they as purely volunteer health care providers deserved gratitude from the host organizations. It was made clear that many volunteers considered themselves invaluable human resources that should not be hindered or regulated by the imposition of burdensome security routines, as any regulation that hampered their volunteering might come at the patients' expense.

Another example of the antiregulatory stance was a debate concerning a medical volunteer who took their child along while volunteering in the heteronomous organizational setting and was barred from seeing patients while the child was present. This resulted in much anger and resentment against the heteronomous hosts, whose decision not to allow children to be present while their parents practiced medicine was portrayed as unprofessional. It was acknowledged that minors should not practice medicine [*sic*], but it was also argued that they might well provide good company for the refugee children present. The autonomy of the health care personnel was thus interpreted as strong enough to sustain the renegotiation of formal standards of medical practice, shifting from "doing things right" to "doing the right things." Here it was especially emphasized that the will to help should supersede any burdensome formal requirements by the host organizations, allowing the volunteers to put patient needs first.

As the above instances occurred, many volunteers began to clearly identify with their previous autonomous organizational setting. The preservation of their autonomy became an imperative in their relationships to the heteronomous organizations, and the introduction of rules that had not been collectively negotiated was seen as a provocation. This is interesting given the fact that health care personnel, among other things, normally wear name tags and do not take their children along to their daily practice at hospitals and health clinics. Rules were not merely invented by the heteronomous organizations; rather, they mirrored established medical practice. The volunteers were especially offended by the guards telling them that they did not want large numbers of people "running around" the facilities. There were apparently also other volunteers (who were not medical professionals) loitering near the building and wanting to help;

the health care volunteers were offended by being treated like layman volunteers. The hurt feelings also seemed to include a sense that the heteronomous organizations did not understand the strong community feel and gray-zone working routines of the autonomous group. Clearly, the heteronomous organizations began to be viewed as a serious environmental constraint by some health care volunteers, although this view was not unanimous.

In the heteronomous setting, then, the presence of increasingly divergent viewpoints within the group reflected a tension between established medical practice and the ad hoc practice conceived by some of the professionals. Rather than aiming to ensure established knowledge of medical practice, professional autonomy (cf. Engel's (1970) definition) was interpreted as the freedom not to be regulated as human resources, and this lack of regulation was emphasized as the main route to "doing the right things." As the period of heteronomous organizing progressed, it appeared not only that the ideal of "doing things right" was challenged by the ideal of "doing the right things," but also that the latter took on more significance in the collective memory of the autonomous period.

In sum, as the organizational settings changed, both material and human resources became significantly more regulated, and regulation was rarely achieved by means of discussions among volunteers; more often, it came by means of direct instruction from the heteronomous organizations. These norms and rules were to some extent perceived as important resources that would support other resources, namely the human resources. The norms and rules were, however, also perceived as environmental constraints when they compromised the volunteers' capability to "do the right things," as this ideal grew increasingly important vis-à-vis "doing things right."

Concluding Discussion

As can be seen in Table 10.1, we found that material resources were the most discussed resources in the autonomous organizational setting. In the heteronomous organizational setting, by contrast, debates primarily concerned human resources. Moreover, during the first stage of

Table 10.1 Usage of resources in different organizational settings

	September 16– October 2	October 3–December 2
Organizational form	Autonomous	Heteronomous
Examples of resources debated in the two periods	Regulation of material resources such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical equipment • Drugs • Boundary items (milk substitute, fluid replacement) 	Regulation of human resources by demanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity cards • Minors not to be present while their parents see patients
Means of regulating resources	Peer discussions resulting in norms and guidelines	Instructions from host organizations, sometimes connected to sanctions
Ideal for organizing advocated among health care professionals	“Doing things right”	“Doing the right things”

organizing, the professionals collaboratively defined and accepted norms and guidelines for the regulation of their acquisition and use of resources, thus largely in keeping with the idea of professional autonomy. During the later stage, however, norms and guidelines—rules, essentially—were imposed by the heteronomous hosts on a seemingly non-negotiable basis. In this situation, a striving for autonomy can be seen, reflected in protests against norms and guidelines similar to those that were embraced in the autonomous setting. In the context of heteronomous organizing, “doing the right things” emerged as a competing ideal to that of “doing things right,” which had been prevalent earlier.

The emphasis on “doing the right things” rather than “doing things right” in the heteronomous organization is striking, as the latter was central in the autonomous context. The transfer from an autonomous to a heteronomous organizational setting seemed to trigger a reaction in which the primary arguments shifted from mainly leaning on the desirability of norms and guidelines to opposing those norms and guidelines when the human resources of the medical professionals themselves were being regulated. This sudden shift in ideals of conduct can be related to previous research on bureaucracy and professionalism. Hall (1967)

described how the transfer from autonomous to heteronomous organization may cause discord in a professional group:

A potential source of conflict for the professional may come from changes within the professional group itself. If there is actually an equilibrium between professional and organizational norms, then changes in the degree of professionalism or bureaucratization would lead to conflict. (p. 477)

More bluntly put: “if the level of bureaucratization is increased, conflict would ensue” (ibid., p. 478). Hall’s ideas are largely in line with our findings in terms of it being easier to be autonomous when autonomy is freely contested in a professional community and when the relevant resource usage is decided upon by that community (see also Engel, 1970). In contrast, when resource use is regulated from outside a professional community, it may trigger a striving for autonomy even at the price of abandoning previously embraced ideals (cf. Engel’s (1970) definition of professional autonomy). It then becomes more important to “do the right things” than to “do things right.”

Interestingly, in the heteronomous setting in our study, the important marker of professional autonomy was the “we” of the health care personnel against the ideals advocated by “them,” the heteronomous hosts. In this type of binary conceptualization, the boundaries between professions inside the group of health care professionals are largely obliterated. Here, the autonomy of the previous organizational setting was coupled with the imperative of health care personnel to help those in need, that is, an argument of altruism. This was contrasted with the demands by the heteronomous host organizations to regulate human resources, such as using identity cards and not taking along minors when practicing medicine. Yet, the dilemma of “doing the right things” at the expense of “doing things right” was in fact not emphasized in the retrospectively idealized autonomous context.

While it is true that the transition to heteronomous organizing triggered new ideals and stronger identity claims, there was, simultaneously, a growing awareness of the importance of regulating human resources and an appreciation of such initiatives taken by the heteronomous organizations. The tension between “doing things right” and “doing the right

things” was thus also evident within the group. Although our empirical material reveals little about the rationale behind the introduction of rules from the heteronomous organizations’ side, these initiatives were interpreted by many of the volunteers as beneficial both for patient safety and for the sake of the volunteers themselves. In a sense, many volunteers viewed the heteronomous organizations as vital for the long-term survival of the group (cf. Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), precisely because they would ensure the provision of material resources as well as more guidelines that would better define the volunteering and make it less burdensome. In that regard, our findings diverge from the longstanding idea of a tension between professional and bureaucratic ideals (Engel, 1970; Hall, 1967). These rather different findings cut to the core of civil society engagement, namely altruism.

Altruism is an espoused value for civil society engagement (Smith, 1981), and in the context of volunteering it may be defined as “any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or cause” (Wilson, 2000, p. 215). Altruism has also been considered an important component of the ethos of health care professions, here interpreted in terms of empathy and humanity (Blomgren, 2003; Burks & Kobus, 2012; Dunn & Jones, 2010). Among volunteering health care professionals, ideals of altruism may surface more than in any other context. However, as seen in our analyzed case, behaving altruistically in a civil society context may necessitate both supporting norms and guidelines *and* having the autonomy to operate without the constraints imposed by such norms and guidelines. In order for human resources to give freely of their time, they may not only need additional resources in the form of delimiting and efficiency-enhancing guidelines, but may simultaneously benefit from some amount of freedom to undertake practices that would not be acceptable in an established health care setting.

The simultaneous need for autonomy on one hand and guidelines on the other also points to the importance of balancing different sources for resource acquisition. As stated by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), resources are acquired in interaction with the environment, and in our case, we see at least two different environmental contexts from which resources were acquired: one more profession-based and one more bureaucratic. Whereas the former is important for creating a sense of autonomy (cf. Engel, 1970;

Freidson, 2001), the latter seems necessary for “putting one’s foot down” when difficult questions arise, such as those around staffing, referral to the public health care system, etc. However, as evidenced by some volunteers’ striving for the rather extreme form of autonomy stretching beyond the profession, neither the profession-based nor the bureaucratic environment can provide all necessary resources. Our case reveals an interesting area (or gray zone, to use the parlance of some of the volunteers) of Swedish civil society emerging at the intersection between increased formalization of welfare service delivery and loosely organized networks of volunteers via social media.

In both time periods analyzed here, the health care professionals were volunteers in a sector of Swedish civil society in which little volunteering occurs. Whereas there was some local know-how surrounding health care volunteering prior to 2013, this did not seem to be prevalent in the broader population of health care volunteers. In fact, many of the volunteers who continuously advocated for stricter guidelines and more referrals to the public health care system referred to their experience from the organization that had led the clinic for undocumented migrants before 2013. Apart from this, there seemed to be very little specific health care volunteering know-how in the group, although there was a great deal of health care provision know-how from both the professions and the regular workplace settings of these professionals. This may be because civil society health care provision in Sweden, as described in the introduction, is normally highly regulated and also paid for by public funds. We can thus see that the conflict that emerged in the different interpretations of how to enable altruism may have stemmed from a lack of experience and professional consensus as to what health care professionals’ volunteering in a Swedish context may actually entail. While all involved agreed that altruism, that is, a voluntary dedication of time and effort by health care professionals for the benefit of patients, is good and important in and of itself, there was no consensus on how to best channel it. The second trend mentioned in the introduction—the swift and flexible organization of volunteers via social media—implies both opportunities and difficulties in this regard. With a possibly larger and broader influx of volunteers, reaching consensus may be even more difficult. Social media could, however, provide an important arena for discussions and, ultimately, for

approaching consensus. The negotiations illustrated in this chapter represent a potential first step in achieving such a consensus in the face of future scenarios in which health care volunteers may be in demand.

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11

Liberty, Loyalty, and Solidarity: The Role of Transnational, National, and Local Resources in Voluntary Organizations in Russia

Zhanna Kravchenko

This chapter examines the interweaving of local, national, and inter/transnational resources in volunteer organizations in Russia. The spatial dimension of resources for the development of Russian civil society has received considerable attention in earlier research because of the dynamic role those resources have played over the past 30 years. Jakobson and Sanovich (2010), for instance, developed a typology of changing models of civil society as a whole; the typology is based on the dominance of *international* or *national* “resources, ideas and behavioural norms” (p. 286) for shaping driving forces, the structure and organizational culture of civil society organizations, and the relationship between civil society and the state. Conversely, Alekseeva (2010) argued that the scope of foreign aid and/or national funding programs rarely reached beyond Russia’s large metropolitan areas and that the majority of (peripheral)

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civil society organizations were obliged to rely on *local* communities in their resource accumulation strategies. Where resources originate and how they become available has been considered significant for accountability and transparency in funding distribution (Javeline & Lindemann-Komarova, 2010, 2020) and the work the resources enable (Crotty, 2009; Fröhlich & Skokova, 2020; Henderson, 2002; Salamon et al., 2015; Skokova et al., 2018; Sundstrom, 2005). The merits of this debate notwithstanding, it establishes the fact that organizational resources may be simultaneously available at all three spatial levels. How this complexity manifests itself at the organizational level and how it affects organizations, though, remains to be explored. Moreover, the abovementioned studies have overlooked the fact that organizational resources cannot be reduced to monetary transactions.

Evidence of low levels of volunteering in Russia in general, and through civil society organizations in particular (Mersiianova & Korneeva, 2011), has driven previous research to focus on workplace volunteering (e.g. Krasnopolskaya et al., 2016) or predictors and patterns of individual participation (Kamerāde et al., 2016; Mersiianova et al., 2019; Nezhnina et al., 2014). However, the growing body of literature on grassroots mobilization (e.g. Zhuravlev, 2017) and community care (Grigoryeva & Parfenova, 2020) sheds new light on volunteering as an important resource inherent to specific civic practices. From the organizational perspective, it has also been shown that recruiting and retaining volunteers requires managing strategies that are influenced by the institutional environment in Russia (Crotty & Ljubownikow, 2020). This research calls attention to organizations that rely on external funding—like other civil society organizations in the country—while also identifying themselves as volunteer-based and relying on volunteers in their missions, structures, and activities. The aim of this chapter is thus twofold: (1) to understand how the norms, structures, and activities generated in volunteer organizations manifest themselves when organizations work with different types of resources; and (2) to understand how resources that organizations generate at the transnational, national, and local levels intertwine and change over time.

I draw on earlier studies that have demonstrated that conceptions of voluntary work/volunteering vary based on historical, cultural, and

political characteristics (Lukka & Ellis Paine, 2007). Scholars generally approach it as an activity, informal or formally organized, that generates some cost to the person performing the activity while benefiting its recipient (Wilson, 2000). While a distinction can be drawn between participating in a voluntary organization and volunteering, it is determined by social circumstances and is therefore rarely articulated. More important is that volunteering can have national or even transnational support but is often concerned with specific place-bound, usually local, issues. This study builds on empirical materials gathered through ethnographic research conducted at two charitable organizations in St. Petersburg—*Nevisky Angel* and *Hesed Avraham*—that through their history have established the format of formal volunteering in Russia.¹ Both organizations have worked closely with local, national, and transnational partners and donors to provide services and assistance directly to vulnerable groups and have striven to ensure and accommodate systematic, long-term labor and other contributions from volunteers.

By examining these organizations, this chapter highlights volunteers as sources of labor, vehicles for building personal relationships and commitments with partners, and fundraising facilitators for civil society organizations. Volunteering is shown here to be an organizational resource that requires a normative foundation, management skills, and social and symbolic capital investments in order to effectively meet structural conditions and respond to pressures. When intertwined with other resources at the national and transnational levels, volunteering may play varying roles: it can be a link that connects organizations to their bases and informs their missions or a utility disconnected from the social effect it aims to produce.

External Resources, Spatial Distribution, and Transformation of Civil Society in Russia

The spatiality of civic mobilization and organization is most often actualized in research focusing on one of its dimensions at a time. For instance, research on various aspects of transnational activism and organizing (Faist & Özveren, 2004; Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Wennerhag, 2008; Wijkström

et al., 2017) has demonstrated how institutional idea(l)s and norms travel through interactions and actions that are not bound by organizing on location. The importance of the national state in general, and of political, social, and religious institutions more specifically, for cross-national variation in the characteristics of civil society organizations has been thoroughly theorized and empirically illustrated in a plethora of comparative studies (Casey, 2016; Enjolras & Sivesind, 2009; Rey-Garcia, 2020; Salamon & Anheier, 1998; Salamon & Sokolowski, 2010, to mention just a few). Studies of civic mobilization around local issues have shed light on the importance of everyday life, individual emotions, and meanings attributed to individual and collective actions as manifestations of structural, psychological, and cultural mechanisms of engagement (and the lack of it) (Eliasoph, 1997, 1998).

The three dimensions of spatiality, however, are not isolated social rooms; rather, they intersect, reinforce, and challenge each other. Some national governments perceive transnational civil society organizations, especially in the area of human rights and democracy, as a threat to sovereignty; these governments may introduce hostile regulations and restrictions on transnational cooperation (and domestic engagement) in this field (Bromley et al., 2020; Carothers & Brechenmacher, 2014; Oelberger & Shachter, 2021). At the same time, national governments encourage expanded participation of civil society organizations in state-funded welfare infrastructure and other service delivery programs (Lundström & Wijkström, 2012; Najam, 2000; Salamon & Toepler, 2015; Salamon et al., 2015). This contributes to a broader process in which civil society organizations increasingly come to resemble businesses (Maier et al., 2016), reduce their reliance on local membership bases, and create new organizational boundaries of exclusion within civil society (Papakostas, 2011a, 2011b). Local activism, thus, often emerges in response to a lack of representation or the raising of barriers to engagement with national politics (Kings, 2011; Zhuravlev, 2017); it may also indicate discontent with transnational conventions for cooperation (see Lukinmaa, Chap. 13 in this volume). To advance to the earlier studies outlined above, this study aims to examine how organizations connect to all three spatial dimensions by examining them through the lens of resources.

Russia presents an interesting case for examining the simultaneous role of transnational, national, and local resources in the development of civil society. As Javeline and Lindemann-Komarova (2020) asserted, it is not the source of resources per se but the mechanism through which they become available to the organization that shapes their significance and effects. Transnational resources were introduced in Russia in the early 1990s through the so-called supply-side model, with donors establishing parameters for funding, setting agendas, and establishing cultural norms for civil society organizations (Jakobson & Sanovich, 2010). While the efforts of transnational cooperation focused on promoting liberal values and democracy (Henderson, 2002; Sundstrom, 2005), they soon came to be seen as contributing to hierarchization within civil society and to the disconnect between organizations and their domestic beneficiaries, to whom they were not accountable and upon whom they did not depend (Richter, 2002).

The introduction of domestic Russian state-run funding programs at the national, regional, and municipal levels in the mid-2000s was aimed at offering an alternative agenda and was conceived as a response to a popular demand for modernization of public services (Benevolenski & Toepler, 2017). However, in their delivery mechanisms, state-run programs differ little from foreign ones; they create new hierarchies and agendas that serve to support the state's legitimacy (Fröhlich & Skokova, 2020) and, in combination with other policies, to restrict and oppress potentially contentious civil society actors (Ljubownikow et al., 2013; Moser & Skripchenko, 2018; Salamon et al., 2015; Skokova et al., 2018; see also Bederson & Semenov, Chap. 7 in this volume). Moreover, the recentralization and strict hierarchy among the national, regional, and local levels of public administration (Bahry, 2005; Gel'man, 2002) arguably render all state resources national.

At the local level, social mobilization occurs around such issues as housing, cultural heritage, and workplace conditions (Aidukaite & Fröhlich, 2015; Clément, 2013; Clément et al., 2010; Kharkhordin, 2011; Zhuravlev, 2017). Earlier research has demonstrated that such initiatives take the form of voluntary associations and activist groups rather than professionalized organizations; such groups find it difficult to comply with the highly rigid bureaucratic procedures of transnational and

domestic donors, and they often become politicized and contentious (Clément & Zhelnina, 2020; Tykanova & Khokhlova, 2020; Zhuravlev et al., 2020). However, little research has been performed on the resources that enable local organizing and their part in the broader structures and dynamic processes of resource accumulation in civil society. This chapter aims to contribute to the existing research by examining organizations that emerged as voluntary associations with the purpose of providing everyday social services. I follow the development of these organizations over the past 30 years, using the retrospective perspective to demonstrate how transnational, national, and local resources manifest themselves in organizational structures and processes in Russia.

Volunteering as a Resource, Civic Engagement as Work

When the Local and Transnational Intertwine

In the literature on civil society, voluntary activities have various connotations. Some scholars approach voluntary engagement as a form of exercising one's democratic right to "choose one's associates and to form associations to advance one's purposes" (Fung, 2003, p. 518). Others also emphasize the cost to the actor that helping a "needy recipient" brings (Lukka & Ellis Paine, 2007, p. 32). From both perspectives, Russia is a country in which neither the democratic right to associate (Kamerāde et al., 2016) nor charitable work (Bodrenkova, 2013; Gorlova, 2019) has particularly deep roots or significant scope. Nevertheless, some commentators trace the history of voluntarism from pre-revolutionary philanthropy to the socialist practices of unpaid labor mobilization through youth/student organizations and educational institutions, trade unions, and large-scale economic projects (e.g. the construction of the Baikal–Amur Mainline or the Virgin Lands campaign) (Voronova, 2011). In the process of late-Soviet and early post-socialist liberalization, an unprecedented wave of mass mobilization manifested itself in growing numbers of voluntary associations and grassroots organizations of various political

and social orientations. They often distanced themselves from the political elites and the bureaucratic state and created horizontal cooperation on a broad spectrum of issues including education, culture, environmental protection, etc. (Shubin, 2017). In this context, as a reaction to the crumbling welfare system and escalating poverty and social exclusion, nongovernmental, not-for-profit initiatives emerged with the purpose of providing social assistance and care (Grigoryeva & Parfenova, 2020).

In April 1988, the charitable society *Nevsky Angel* (then *Leningrad*) was established in what was then Leningrad (present-day St. Petersburg); its mission was to help those in need and to popularize charitable activities. Formal control over the organization was delegated to a steering board consisting of representatives of *Leningrad's* founding organizations,² including the Writers' and Journalists' Unions, the Leningrad Bar Association, institutions of higher education in culture, medicine and pedagogy, and others. Describing the involvement of these organizations in the founding process as dictated by legislation and therefore a formality, Svetlana Mikhailova, one of the main narrators of *Nevsky Angel's* history, emphasized that it was not the affiliation with the founding organizations but the involvement in intellectual labor and the search for like-minded people, "spiritual bonds[,] and opportunities for self-realization" that ensured *Nevsky Angel's* ability to make an impact from the start (Mikhailova, 2020a, p. 9). The organization's structure, processes, and norms emerged from the knowledge, connections, and physical labor of its typical volunteers: educated, middle-aged women with low incomes.

The mythology of *Nevsky Angel* began with Daniil Granin's article "On mercy," which was published in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in 1987. Reflecting on his experience of indifference from strangers after being hurt on the street in Leningrad, the author called for recognition of and action against social injustices as a part of political, economic, and ideological liberation. Elderly people who were lonely, disabled, or ill became the main target group for the volunteers, who gathered and disseminated information about available institutional help and provided direct material assistance and social support. During the early months of their work, small private donations were the main resource redistributed to the beneficiaries. In early 1989, *Nevsky Angel* organized one of the first mass donation campaigns in the city, with collection points for donations and

clothes at several underground stations around the city. The organization very quickly managed to attract systematic support from other public organizations and cooperatives, the first for-profit enterprises that emerged in the late 1980s in the Soviet Union. Very shortly after its establishment, the organization became a platform that supported the formation of new civil society organizations. Some of these emerged directly from the specialized activities of Nevsky Angel, and others were wholly independent initiatives.

Nevsky Angel's resource mobilizing efforts extended to international organizations, most often religious confessions, that became a capacity-building resource for the organization as well as a source of material support for the target group. For instance, the *Diakonisches Werk Hamburg* (DWH) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in northern Germany became a long-term partner in promoting faith-based social work (Mikhailova, 2020b, p. 9). After only a few years, with assistance from DWH, Nevsky Angel became the main hub for humanitarian help going from Germany to various charitable and religious organizations in St. Petersburg. It is noteworthy that one of the most significant collaborations was established with the Salvation Army and extended beyond receiving resources into supporting Salvation Army branches by promoting their spiritual mission at the time when that organization was still proscribed in the country. Religious commitment was common among Nevsky Angel's volunteers and leaders (Gavrilina, 2017); the history of religion was taught alongside nursing and care in the organization's first training program for social workers, established in 1989 (Mikhailova, 2020a). Civil engagement underpinned by Orthodox Christianity has been shown to lean toward democratic practices and values in Russia (Marsh, 2005), which may be one of the factors that contributed to the openness of values-driven social mobilization to Nevsky Angel's international cooperations.

The re-institutionalization of volunteering and philanthropy and the substantial scope of social problems yielded fertile ground for the emergence of other organizations with the same mission. In 1993, the first *Hesed Avraham*, a volunteer organization, was established by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) in St. Petersburg. Similar to many other international organizations working in Russia at that time,

the JDC provided significant, non-sectarian humanitarian help, including the provision of medical and food supplies as well as direct financial donations. Hesed Avraham, however, was established specifically to address the material and psychosocial needs of the city's Jewish community (Avgar et al. 2004). With its long experience in post-crisis interventions and its mission to assist distressed Jewish communities around the world, the JDC provided funding and organizational support for welfare services to the elderly, many of whom were experiencing poverty as well as physical and social isolation in the aftermath of a massive wave of emigration from 1989 to 1991 (Trier, 1996). As with the case of Nevsky Angel, the elderly became the main beneficiary of Hesed Avraham's social services; however, those who were able to participate also constituted Hesed Avraham's primary recruitment group.

The ideological foundation of the welfare provision model developed by Hesed Avraham had three pillars: *community* solidarity that aimed at delivering services for and with the local Jewish community, *voluntarism* that enabled service provision, and *Yiddishkeit* (Jewish traditions) that emphasized ethnic and religious unity and the return to traditional roots (Mirsky et al., 2006). The first two principles were implemented when a local director, a steering board, and several paid employees were appointed by the JDC after the first year of the organization's work in Russia and, together with volunteers, took charge of all operations. From the start, the organization delivered food packages and ran communal dining rooms, provided medical consultations, rented out rehabilitation equipment, assisted with home repairs, and organized leisure activities and cultural events for beneficiaries and volunteers. With the expansion of home care services and the growing number of professional paid staff,³ volunteers continued to be included in all aspects of service delivery and some administrative processes. As noted by Mirsky et al. (2006), religiosity was not a central part of the Jewish traditions that Hesed aimed to accentuate. Although religious norms and practices provided content for many activities and linked the organization and the synagogue, Jewish heritage rather than religious re-identification was expected to emerge from communal solidarity.

Identifying a need for professional training in social and community work that had earlier been recognized by Nevsky Angel, the JDC

established the William Rosenwald Institute for Communal and Social Workers in St. Petersburg and launched educational programs for volunteers and employees. The institute's training covered a broad range of topics, including social and community work, management, and leadership; it also offered tuition in specific service skills. Such programs served as forums for socialization and acculturation, yielding the new profession of "Jewish social worker" (Mirsky et al., 2006), and they aspired to ensure a sustainable cadre to compensate for turnover. They also became a platform for geographical expansion of the Hesed model throughout the country. The JDC transplanted the model more or less in its entirety, either by founding new organizations (e.g. *Hesed Yizchak* in Pskov in 1995 and *Hesed Khasdey Neshama* in Tula in 1996) or re-shaping existing ones (e.g. the charitable foundation *Iad ezra* in Moscow, established in 1991).

To summarize, by mid-1995, two volunteer-based organizations were pursuing the mission of charitable assistance and service provision to St. Petersburg's most socioeconomically vulnerable population groups. Nevsky Angel aimed to work *for the community* it broadly identified as the poor and those in need. Hesed Avraham was focusing on mobilizing the local Jewish population to find their identity through charitable work *with the community*. Both organizations attracted volunteers, mainly women, from among the highly educated, and both provided training and served as springboards for new organizations. Volunteering became a form of occupation for many who could work but were not employed, offering them nonmonetary compensation in such forms as social contacts, professional training, leisure activities, identity, and spirituality. In the absence of a state infrastructure, transnational resources arrived in two forms: resources that were distributed directly to beneficiaries (money, food, clothing) and funding and expert knowledge that enabled local organizing.

When the State Steps in

By the mid-2000s, when state agencies at the federal and regional levels began engaging with Russian civil society in a more comprehensive way, Nevsky Angel and Hesed Avraham were playing a prominent role in the

“civilizing mission” embedded in resources, ideas, and organizational practices introduced with support from international organizations (Jakobson & Sanovich, 2010, p. 287). In 1998, under the burdens of worsening socioeconomic problems and a lack of resources in the aftermath of the financial crash as well as the end of its cooperation with the DWH, Nevsky Angel closed its service delivery operations in order to promote volunteering as a capacity-building instrument for other organizations. In the early 2000s, although funding was still coming from international donors (e.g. the Eurasia Foundation, which operated in Russia until 2005), the organization’s focus shifted to policy lobbying at the city, regional, and national levels (Mikhailova, 2020c).

During the same period, Hesed Avraham became the institution around which the Jewish community in St. Petersburg was consolidated, and an umbrella network of Hesed centers, *Idud Hasadim*, was established. In the city, Hesed Avraham brought representatives of Jewish religious, educational, and cultural organizations into its steering board and joined several of them in renting office space at the Yesod Jewish community center, thus aiming to augment cultural, social, and symbolic resources for the community as a whole. Across the country, with JDC support, Hesed Avraham took part in various training operations to enable emerging Hesed centers to raise their own funding, to maintain solidarity in their local communities, and to advocate on behalf of those communities.

Part of both organizations’ success was achieved through engagement with public organizations and state agencies, although such interactions were relatively limited for over a decade. Until 1995, the state had few legal norms framing nonprofit nongovernmental activity. (The 1990 Soviet law N 1708-I “On public associations” was not replaced with N 82-FZ until 1995, alongside the introduction of the laws N 7-FZ “On non-profit organizations” and N 135-FZ “On charitable activities and charitable organizations.”) In addition, no state funding was available in any systematic or transparent way until the mid-2000s (Alekseeva, 2010; Javeline & Lindemann-Komarova, 2010). As a result, Hesed Avraham did not account for any state support from that period, while Nevsky Angel received administrative and in-kind support from the city administration, including rent-free office spaces and event venues as well as

informational support. However, their unique experience in the sphere of welfare provision attracted the attention of state agencies to both organizations, giving them an opportunity to engage in lobbying. Hesed Avraham focused on participating in the development of city programs for welfare provision, particularly in the area of home care for the elderly and disabled. Nevsky Angel took part in several legislative initiatives, including lobbying for legislation on volunteering.⁴ Such advocacy efforts not only increased the organizations' visibility among other civil society organizations, but also laid the foundation for receiving state funding once it became available.

In the mid-2000s, the federal government poured financial and administrative resources into a series of state-run mass movements (Hemment, 2009, 2012) but also supported independent organizations through grants at the federal level (the Presidential Grants and subventions from the Ministry of Economic Development) and at the regional level (distributed by heads of regional governments and regional agencies and ministries; see, for example, Skokova & Fröhlich, Chap. 3 in this volume). Beginning in 2003 and for almost six years, Nevsky Angel focused on developing an infrastructure for volunteering in the welfare sector at the request of and with funding from the Committee on Social Policy of the city administration of St. Petersburg. In 2009, Nevsky Angel opened a Center for the Support of Volunteer Initiatives (*Tsentr dobrovol'cheskikh initsiativ*), which relies on information and human resources from Nevsky Angel. The Center and Nevsky Angel carry out the same work, providing methodological and legal services as well as training to organizations that wish to engage in volunteer work and to individuals who wish to provide volunteer labor. The distinction between the two is that Nevsky Angel's funding comes from federal programs and frames cooperation with public and civil society organizations across the entire country, while the Center is fully funded through the city budget and its mission includes coordinating policy-making efforts on volunteering between different state agencies and authorities.

Nevsky Angel has come to rely on Hesed Avraham's partnership as it is the only organization in the city "that can handle several hundred volunteers effectively" (Coordinator of volunteer programs at Nevsky Angel, observation, September 24, 2015). Hesed Avraham earned this high

praise through its continued volunteer-based social service provision as a subcontractor of the abovementioned Committee on Social Policy of St. Petersburg's city administration. With the funding it received for paid care professionals, Hesed Avraham launched home care programs for the broad group of elderly residents of the city and the surrounding region. The organization not only strove to maintain its original volunteer pool but also redirected volunteers to care for people outside the Jewish community and recruited new, non-Jewish volunteers. Moreover, the city's standard catalogue of social services, which is used by all public and non-profit organizations, was developed based on the outcomes of several pilot projects conducted by Hesed Avraham. As a result of its expansion, Hesed Avraham became regularly involved in various capacity-building activities organized by Nevsky Angel and other, similar resource centers.

The outlined changes indicate that, starting with the same humanitarian mission to address the dire consequences of socioeconomic disintegration, Nevsky Angel and Hesed Avraham achieved very different ends. Nevsky Angel underwent a reorientation from service delivery to capacity-building for other organizations, reducing its organizational core to four managers and a handful of volunteers who are qualified to contribute to capacity-building activities. Reflecting upon this transformation at a public conference on volunteering, Svetlana Mikhailova asserted that the rationale for working with the state is to mobilize all existing resources, public and civic, assuming equal responsibility for social well-being on the part of the state and civil society (observation, September 24, 2015). This, however, contrasts with the fact that the organization decided against mobilizing local resources through mass volunteering and reduced its own role to that of providing expert knowledge. The lack of direct engagement with beneficiaries may be suggested as a reason for the loss of trust among the city's population that the organization experienced in later years. Mikhailova recalled a fundraising event of the late 1980s for the benefit of survivors of the Siege of Leningrad, an event at which the entire city stood together to support the survivors and Nevsky Angel. Their donations to Nevsky Angel paid for several years of training programs for volunteers. Mikhailova reflected that such an event would be impossible to carry out in the 2010s; the embeddedness of the organization in the state infrastructure made it less visible to the local target

groups and potential donors, and the financial stability guaranteed by state funding did not yield the same social and symbolic capital that the organization had enjoyed in its first decade of existence.

In contrast, Hesed Avraham grew into the most prominent actor in the sphere of elderly care services, with a reputation so positive and encompassing that it is able to withstand the growing pressures on foreign-funded organizations. In a discussion of the implications of the introduction of the “foreign agents” law (see Bederson & Semenov, Chap. 7 in this volume), Hesed Avraham Director Leonid Kolton asserted that the organization’s lobbying work, which can be perceived as a political activity, would eventually have to be minimized (personal communication, September 21, 2015). However, for Kolton, this was not a result of state pressures; rather, it derived from the necessity to separate service provision and advocacy in order to control service quality, thus ensuring the rights of the beneficiaries. Understood in this way, lobbying state agencies on behalf of socially vulnerable groups would be delegated to external organizations, which do not face the challenges that accompany foreign donations. Since the generous financial support from the JDC is guaranteed—in 2017 it amounted to nearly 50% of all revenues (Hesed Avraham, 2018)—state funding is not crucial for the survival of Hesed Avraham as it is for Nevsky Angel. Conversely, foreign donors as well as the local Jewish community are the ones who question why the expansion needed to take place at all. Volunteers, especially those with long experience and strong identification with the Jewish community, regret the diminishing of Jewishness in the content of the leisure and training activities offered to volunteers (personal communication with an anonymous volunteer, October 15, 2015). Nevertheless, most volunteers remain driven by their sense of belonging to the local and global Jewish community, although their work benefits non-Jews.

In terms of the meaning of volunteering as a resource and its value for the organizations and the society at large, the leaders of Nevsky Angel and Hesed Avraham have reached diametrically opposed conclusions. Nevsky Angel President Vladimir Luk’ianov, when hosting a conference at the end of a state-funded capacity-building project, asserted that the organization’s experience of the 1990s was not only relevant as a best practice to be shared with other organizations, but that it could be a

universal model applicable in any context by any organization. Moreover, he championed legal establishment of a recognized monetary equivalent for volunteer work, allowing it to be used by various organizations as a measure of co-financing projects (observation, September 24, 2015). Meanwhile, Leonid Kolton acknowledged with pride Hesed Avraham's unique scope of volunteer engagement but rejected the idea that its experience could be extrapolated to other organizations:

We probably are the biggest volunteer organization [in the country], but I will never attempt to teach anyone [outside of Idud Hasadim]. There is no science in volunteering; when you start formalizing it, you lose its soul. It can only be measured by its social effect, not an economic one. Without volunteers, we would become a *sobes* [a disparaging term colloquially applied to public social services, author's note]. (Personal communication, September 21, 2015)

The processes that took place during the period under consideration cannot be seen only as a consequence of organizations' involvement with state funding agencies. Nevsky Angel's decision to dismantle its charitable operations and focus on training and facilitating volunteer engagement for other organizations took place before any state funding competitions were launched. Hesed Avraham had to overcome significant difficulties to enter the rigid system of procurements, which resisted the privatization of welfare provision in the city (Grigoryeva & Parfenova, 2021). Nevertheless, involvement with the state has solidified Nevsky Angel's departure from the idea of volunteering as an encompassing social mobilization in solidarity with vulnerable groups; it has moved toward a concept of volunteering as free labor used by organizations to fulfill their needs. As such, Nevsky Angel uses its few remaining volunteers as pro-bono specialists while acting as a placement center for all other volunteers. Hesed Avraham was forced to curtail its advocacy work with policymakers because of increased state pressure on organizations receiving foreign funding. In both cases, schisms with the organizations' local bases resulted.

Concluding Discussion

I began this chapter by asking how volunteer organizations work with different types of external resources and whether those resources have an influence on organizations' normative foundation, their structures, and their activities from a dynamic perspective on resource accumulation and interdependence. The organizations presented in this study are among the oldest in the country; they emerged as charitable initiatives supporting the most vulnerable populations in St. Petersburg in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Both organizations can be compared to avant-garde professionals (see Kings, Chap. 8 in this volume) in that they used local, national, and transnational resources—including funding, in-kind assistance, expert knowledge, ideas, and traditions—to develop new forms of social mobilization and technologies of welfare provision. Additionally, both raised those resources to the regional and national levels, albeit in very different ways.

With support from transnational, often faith-based, organizations, Nevsky Angel channeled individual charitable inclinations born in a period of dire socioeconomic disintegration into a form of privatized social work, continuing until it could no longer manage the scope of its activities. Its reorientation into a capacity-building volunteer-promoting organization took place due to the instability of transnational funding that Nevsky Angel experienced. However, its new format was attractive to the state funding programs that were launched in the mid-2000s; it also became a funding-generating mechanism, as some of Nevsky Angel's training services were, and still are, sold to other organizations. The loss of connection to its original base of volunteers and beneficiaries led to diminished trust in Nevsky Angel and to its current inability to mobilize broader resources for philanthropic purposes despite its substantial symbolic capital among local civil society organizations.

Hesed Avraham can be seen as a transplant of an internationally well-established community work model (Popple, 2015) aiming to mobilize the Jewish population of St. Petersburg (and subsequently across Russia) for mutual support and to re-establish its identification with and connection to the international Jewish community. The stability of JDC

funding has ensured that this model still dominates the identity and activities of Hesed Avraham, even though the organization has branched out into welfare provision for vulnerable non-Jewish groups. As one of the city's largest private providers, the organization has a crucial role in St. Petersburg's system of welfare services; however, it is not exempt from the pressures on foreign-funded organizations and has diminished its involvement in policy-making to avoid damaging state scrutiny.

As I have shown, for both organizations, volunteers were a local resource, instrumental in managing structural conditions and pressures, ensuring the supply of other resources, and establishing relations to the state and to other civil society organizations at the local and national levels. They laid the foundation for organization-building (although a paid core staff emerged early on), ensured the organizations' accountability to their stakeholders, and generated legitimacy and trust through a mutual exchange of symbolic and economic values. Although volunteering in Russia most often takes place in the sphere of social care (Solodykhina & Chernykh, 2010), it is usually realized outside of a formal organizational setting (Krasnopolskaya et al., 2016). Nevsky Angel and Hesed Avraham have demonstrated that, in order to retain volunteers, formal organizations must not only offer a way to make a meaningful contribution but also provide a framework for long-lasting engagement. Although the managerial burden created by working with volunteers can be mitigated by keeping their pool limited, as in Nevsky Angel's case (Crotty & Ljubownikow, 2020), we can see from the example of Hesed Avraham that substantial management capacity is necessary in order to render volunteering a renewable and reliable resource.

Contemporary commentators have argued that transnational donors in Russia have been mostly concerned with promoting democracy and human rights (Narozhna, 2004), detached from the socioeconomic needs of the local population (Jakobson & Sanovich, 2010). In stark contrast with this assessment, the case studies presented in this chapter establish that transnational donors do provide funding under conditions of horizontal solidarity in welfare provision (Hesed Avraham) and strengthen already-burgeoning philanthropic mobilization (Nevsky Angel). Nevertheless, since the mid-2000s, both organizations have found it necessary to operate in an environment dominated by the perception of poor alignment between donors'

agendas and the priorities of Russian society (Aksartova, 2009). As foreign funding gradually became regarded as a threat rather than an opportunity by the political elites, increasingly repressive legislation was introduced that limited recipient organizations and largely pushed transnational donors out of the country (Flikke, 2016). As a result, Hesed Avraham addressed the risk of incurring severe costs associated with the “foreign agent” label by gradually withdrawing from activities that could be considered political. Like many other organizations (Skokova et al., 2018), Nevsky Angel carved a space for engagement with the state by forgoing foreign funding completely and, in some of its activities, becoming indistinguishable from state agencies that promote volunteering.

Much has been said about the role of the Russian state in the development of the country’s civil society as a whole and of its volunteering in particular. The resurgence of state control over all areas of society during the past 20 years has manifested itself in the consolidation of state resources to create strong and resource-dependent relationships between state agencies and civil society organizations, as well as the negation of the political potential of civic organizing (Ljubownikow et al., 2013). The low level of civil liberties and the regulatory restrictions placed on the activities of civil society organizations deter volunteering (Kamerāde et al., 2016), despite declarative campaigns and funding programs to attract volunteer resources to augment state social service provision (Benevolenski & Toepler, 2017).

The Russian state’s earlier attempts to foster loyalist grassroots mobilization and channel volunteering into “state-sanctioned projects of social renewal” (Hemment, 2009, p. 48) have failed, amounting to nothing more than “Potemkin NGOs” (Hemment, 2012) in which personal values and motives became subjugated by the state’s political agenda and its hierarchical accountability system (Krivonos, 2015). Against this background, it is easier to understand Vladimir Luk’ianov’s assessment that civil society organizations had become “interest clubs” closed off to their immediate environment, while public organizations had realized the value of using volunteer labor but rarely understood how to do it or what drove them (observation, September 25, 2015). In addition to insulating Russian civil society from global influences and transnational partnerships, state policies have discouraged volunteering as a practice of social

solidarity and democratic participation. Hesed Avraham continues to recruit most of its volunteers from the Jewish community, interweaving local and global identities and traditions that remain separate from the state.

The making of civil society in the process of post-Soviet liberalization in Russia was dominated by professional, “member-less” (Papakostas, 2011b) organizations rather than voluntary associations, with volunteering becoming predominantly an individual rather than a collective form of civic commitment. Examining the mobilization, convertibility, and dissemination of transnational, national, and local resources in volunteer organizations in St. Petersburg, I have placed them in the context of local socioeconomic conditions, national politics, and the global spread of ideas and finances, thus overcoming some of the limitations of earlier research that often separates their influences.⁵ It has become evident that, drawing on various resources, both Nevsky Angel and Hesed Avraham were often able to convert them into resources for other organizations, becoming mediators of material support and sources of unique expert knowledge. With an awareness of the complexity of the patterns of organizational dependency and autonomy from the dynamic perspective, I conclude by asserting that local and transnational resources were indeed able to create a vibrant environment for volunteering, although a stable flow of such resources was not necessarily guaranteed. The nation-state’s suspicion toward the horizontal solidarity associated with local mobilization and its attacks on the liberties associated with transnational actors have failed to generate loyalty that could be expressed through volunteering despite the steady and significant resources it now distributes.

Notes

1. This work was financed by the Swedish National Research Council, Grant 2014–1557. The fieldwork was carried out between 2015 and 2017, when I attended various internal events organized by the organizations (for instance, training seminars for volunteers), observed their representatives at public events (such as expert conferences and training activities for civil society organizations), and interviewed their representatives. I also gained

- access to internal documentation (materials for training courses, reports to donors) as well as public accounts (publications in journals, newspapers, and books, and reports communicated via their Internet pages). All of these materials were obtained with the organizations' consent; they cover the period from the organizations' respective establishments until the present day, and they contain no personal data.
2. Although individuals were legally allowed to form voluntary associations (by the Edict by the Council of People's Commissars from July 10, 1932, in force until 1995), in practice only legal entities were given the right to establish such associations, even when those associations were not conceived as umbrella organizations for the founding members (Mikhailova, 2020a, 2020b).
 3. There is no consistent data on the number of paid employees over the years. Starting with five employees in 1994, the number of paid staff members grew to 65 administrative employees and 376 home care workers (Zalcberg et al., 2003, pp. 4–5).
 4. It is important to note that, due to the need to use international terminology when working with international volunteers and relevant organizations, current legislation draws a distinction between *dobrovol'chestvo*, volunteering as participation in religious communities, homeland defense, and in medical experiments; *dobrovol'cheskaya deyatel'nost'*, which can be translated as “do-gooder” or charitable activity; and *volonterstvo*, volunteer work legally recognized and regulated as volunteering at mass sport and cultural events such as the 2014 Olympic Games.
 5. It is a limitation of this study that it does not include a more detailed account of organizations' work with local corporate organizations; information on such cooperation is relatively unsystematic and lacks transparency.

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12

Resources Shifting Values: Online and Offline Resources in Swedish Civil Society

Håkan Johansson and Gabriella Scaramuzzino

Introduction

Resources have always been at the heart of civil society theorizing. While many earlier theories focused on resources in the forms of money, people, ideas, or personnel, recent debates capture the Internet and social media as additional environments for resource mobilization. It is beyond doubt that social media changes the ways in which people interact and enables organizing outside organizations (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Scaramuzzino, 2017; Shirky, 2008; Turunen & Weinryb, 2017). It is common for people to connect as individuals on social media in addition to acting as members of formal civil society organizations (Van Stekelenburg, 2012). Occasionally, people also use social media to start protests to achieve social change. Although sometimes criticized as “slacktivism” or “clicktivism” (Glenn, 2015; Karpf, 2010), likes, followers, and members on social media are highly valuable for civil society actors attempting to gain legitimacy.

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Crowdfunding is an important way of raising money (Croeser & Highfield, 2014; Karpf, 2012; Korolczuk, 2014), and online petitions, digitalized campaigns, and social media protests are major avenues for those seeking to influence public opinion and political decision-making (Johansson & Scaramuzzino, 2019). The advent of social media has certainly provided civil society actors with access to new types of resources and allowed them to gather and mobilize extensive digital resources.

The development of online resources through social media raises a series of key analytical questions with regard to the availability of offline and online resources for various types of civil society actors, the value of offline resources vis-à-vis online resources, and why some civil society actors are able to mobilize extensive online resources while others seem to fail. Current research on these matters largely sees resources as originating either from offline *or* from online environments and overlooks the fact that, in contemporary society, both offline *and* online resources are important. We argue that to gain a more comprehensive picture of present resource bases for civil society, scholars need to address those resources in combination and to conceptualize the contrasts between them. This chapter seeks to contribute to current research by discussing available offline and online resources in combination. We provide a thematic comparison of three central types of resources for civil society actors: human (e.g. members, followers, and participants), economic, and political (e.g. access to policy-making processes and contacts with politicians).

The analysis draws on public statistics and representative surveys with Swedish civil society organizations. We combine these materials with detailed case studies of three Swedish online actors that exemplify success in the mobilization of resources on social media. *Inte rasist men*,¹ #jag-ärhär,² and #vistårinteut³ have, in a relatively short amount of time, mobilized large numbers of people (between approximately 76,000 and 214,000 likes on Facebook) and attracted financial support through crowdfunding. Between November 2016 and February 2017, we conducted a small set of interviews with representatives from *Inte rasist men*, #jagärhär and #vistårinteut and collected data from these online actors' websites and social media channels. (For ethical reasons, we include no data from closed social media rooms.) The comparison allows us to highlight differences between mobilizing people, raising money, and

gathering political resources both offline and online. We also discuss the value of different resources and consider whether use of the Internet and social media has contributed to a devaluation of the traditional resource base of Swedish civil society.

Mobilizing People Offline and Online

All countries have particular ways of structuring and distributing the resources available to civil society actors. Swedish civil society has its roots in the popular movement (*folkrörelse*) model with its large, membership-based collective action organizations, often with a close connection to the labor movement and the Social Democratic party (Skov Henriksen et al., 2019). This is one of the reasons why Sweden—together with other Nordic countries—stands out in international comparisons as a country with high membership counts, a strong economic foundation based on membership fees, and a legitimacy to act in politics that is linked to the size of the membership base (see Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino, 2020). The country's high level of organization is also notable internationally: more than 250,000 formal civil society organizations⁴ appear in public records (Statistics Sweden, 2018, data for 2016). The relatively large share of organizations (approximately 25 for every 1000 inhabitants) reflects a thick and dense institutionalized landscape of organized civil society.

Human resources are thus linked to associations and constitute a cornerstone of organized civil society manifested in members, professionals, and non-member volunteers. Members constitute something of a gold standard in the Swedish context since they have both the legitimacy to act and the ability to obtain additional resources. However, while the popular movement model still forms a key basis, trends like NGO-ization (Jacobsson & Saxonberg, 2013), bureaucratization, and professionalization (Hwang & Powell, 2009) challenge and add another dimension to the resource base of Swedish organizing. Papakostas (2011a, 2011b) argues that a growing number of organizations exists, yet with lower shares of members. The resource base is thus in flux, moving from members involved in an association towards professional actors employed within an organization (Papakostas, 2011a, 2011b). These earlier studies

suggest that the quality of membership has changed from engaged members taking part in internal decision-making to what might be called “astroturf membership,” with passive members who rarely participate in the daily life of an association. This is in line with the arguments of international commentators that participation in membership-based associations has been declining in many countries (Skocpol, 2003; Tranvik & Selle, 2007; see also Einarsson, 2011; Palm, 2017). However, the picture is not simple. Studies also show that a large majority of the Swedish population continues to hold membership in one or more associations (e.g. von Essen et al., 2015) and that the overall numbers of people employed by associations tend to be stable (Statistics Sweden, 2018; see also Sivesind & Saglie, 2017).

While members and professionals constitute two key elements of organizations’ human resources, volunteers are of equal importance. In this respect, too, Swedish civil society stands out in international comparisons. Volunteering levels in Sweden are high (similar to those in other Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands), reflecting a dense organizational network (Skov Henriksen et al., 2019). Approximately 50% of the adult population are regularly engaged in volunteering activities, and estimates suggest that the work they perform on an annual basis is equivalent to that of 350,000 full-time workers (von Essen et al., 2015). The thick organizational structure constitutes the platform for people to volunteer, although we find more structured patterns of volunteering linked to particular issues, events, and places outside the organizational frame (Turunen & Weinryb, 2017). Volunteering is largely linked to sports and cultural and recreational activities (e.g. Selle et al., 2019). Also with regard to volunteering, recent studies show very stable or even increasing levels of engagement over the last decades. Within the area of welfare services, there is a clear increase in people’s willingness to volunteer (Qvist et al., 2019).

The distribution of human resources differs across different types of organizations. In a previous study (Scaramuzzino & Wennerhag, 2019), we investigated the resource bases for a representative sample of Swedish civil society organizations (see Table 12.1), including national and local organizations.⁵ We found that the majority of Swedish civil society organizations have no employed staff and that they have relatively high levels

Table 12.1 Human resources distribution by type of organization (%)

	Organizations representing specific interests				Organizations representing diffuse interests				Cramer's V		
	Disability org.	Temperance and drug users' org.	Victim support org.	Other interest org. for Women's social groups	Humanitarian org.	Social service and org. congregations	Religious associations	Political parties			
<i>Membership base</i>											
Meta-organization	4	10	2	0	0	6	10	3	1	3	n.s.
1-99 individuals	42	63	26	67	79	24	52	71	49	58	0.302***
100-999 individuals	49	19	45	33	10	62	39	19	22	33	0.324***
1000+ individuals	5	8	27	0	10	11	3	5	27	7	0.272***
<i>Paid staff</i>											
No paid staff	78	73	68	50	54	87	78	50	49	76	0.306***
Fewer than 5	19	15	18	33	46	10	15	35	28	22	0.198***
5 or more	4	12	14	14	0	3	7	13	23	3	0.275***
<i>Volunteers</i>											
No volunteers	89	85	99	50	78	86	68	58	63	93	0.336***
Fewer than 10	5	12	0	0	4	6	15	29	11	3	0.208***
10 or more	5	3	1	50	19	8	17	13	27	4	0.307***
<i>Elected representatives</i>											
Fewer than 10	73	80	34	67	96	54	72	95	53	48	0.313***
10 or more	27	20	66	33	4	46	28	5	47	52	0.313***
Total (N)	155-167	60-72	99-112	52-56	80-90	134-148	387-450	66-78	481-533	71-82	1595-1786

Source: Adjusted from Scaramuzzino and Wennerhag (2019, p. 81)

Note: The measure of association between the variables is Cramer's V. * = 5%, ** = 1%, and *** = 0.1% significance. n.s. = not significant

of membership. At the same time, the degree to which they rely on volunteers should not be exaggerated, since the majority of them do not appear to engage volunteers at all.

While members, professionals, and non-member volunteers constitute cornerstones of organized civil society, “people” also form a key resource online as they provide likes and become followers and group members on, for instance, Facebook. Having many likes and followers on social media can be a way to gain public recognition and political influence (Johansson & Scaramuzzino, 2019; Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino, 2020). Although some critics question whether there is any real engagement behind this form of activism, others claim that it can offer functional equivalency to some offline activist tactics and that it usually complements rather than substitutes for a broad offline repertoire of action (Karpf, 2012). Moreover, personalized content sharing via digital platforms builds communication as a prominent part of organizational structure and can have a real effect, especially in contentious politics (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). A large membership base clearly confers legitimacy and resources to act, but so do likes and followers on social media.

The online actors studied in this chapter are examples of actors that have been successful in mobilizing followers and participants within a relatively short period of time. *Inte rasist men* was started in the spring of 2012 by a young Swedish trade union member for industrial workers who felt that the union did not do enough to deal with the growing number of members who sympathized with the Sweden Democrats, a nationalistic, right-wing party with a socially conservative and anti-immigration agenda. *Inte rasist men* uses political satire to examine the Sweden Democrats, and as of January 18, 2019, it had nearly 214,000 likes on Facebook and more than 40,000 followers on Twitter. *#jagärhär* was established on May 13, 2016, by a Swedish journalist and is now also a formal association. It had a closed Facebook group with approximately 74,000 members who “patrolled” social media in order to try to uphold a minimum standard of “civilized speech” and work for an inclusive society without hatred. By writing comments in threads, sometimes using the hashtag *#jagärhär*, and reporting hateful content on social media, they were fighting hate, trolls, filter bubbles, algorithms, fake news, and

post-truth. Finally, *#vistårinteut—men vi slutar aldrig kämpa* started on September 27, 2016, to protest the treatment of unaccompanied children seeking asylum in Sweden. As of January 18, 2019, its Facebook page had almost 76,000 likes, and, according to its website, its closed Facebook group had 11,000 members. It had 5368 followers on Twitter.

In comparison to some of the largest Swedish civil society organizations, these three online actors had similar numbers of likes and followers. For instance, in January 2019, Amnesty International Sweden had approximately 97,000 likes and the Swedish Red Cross nearly 170,000 likes on Facebook. In this respect, *Inte rasist men*, with 214,000 likes on Facebook, actually had more (digital) human resources than the Swedish Red Cross. Nevertheless, it is misleading to suggest that the value of one member is equal to that of one follower. The actual value of both members in formal associations and online followers and participants is contingent upon such factors as time, context, the actor seeking to make use of these resources, and the intended purpose.

While the question of how different types of resources are valued goes beyond the scope of this chapter, it is apparent that digital human resources are mobilized at a much greater speed than offline human resources by reducing the importance of geographical and temporal constraints. Despite different geographical locations, people are able to “meet” and communicate. Social media has not only reduced the thresholds for human resource mobilization but has also reorganized the spatial and temporal dimensions of human resources (cf. Karpf, 2012; Shirky, 2008). While our three cases have managed to gather large groups and many active participants in a short time, it is extremely difficult, in terms of space, time, money, and coordination, to gather 100,000 people in one geographical location to communicate. By using Facebook, however, *Inte rasist men* was easily able to gather more than 200,000 people as well as analyze and keep track of which audiences were following it. *#jagärhär* described its group members as ordinary people who were “tired of being hated.” One interviewee said that it really “comes from below” and “it is people sitting at their computer and thinking ‘no, now it is enough’” (Interviewee 2).

The speed and high volumes of digital human resources constitute not only an opportunity for civil society actors, but also a challenge, for

instance, with regard to the coordination of human resources. In fact, the abundance of digital human resources that we found in our three cases pushed *#jagärhär* and *#vistårinteut* to set up rules and reviews for group members. *#vistårinteut* also made its Facebook group secret in order to restrict access. In addition, we observed efforts to encourage people to become more deeply involved as well as sharing and liking posts on Facebook. As stated by Interviewee 1,

It takes a tremendous amount of time getting people to engage beyond clicktivism, so to speak. Clicktivism is something else. You have not made a difference because you have clicked the “like” button on a post on Facebook. It does not change anything. It is very problematic to think that to click and like will change the world. It is when you get those people who are clicktivists to actually take one step further and do something, and to engage....

This reflects strategies to go beyond clicktivism and slacktivism and to increase the “real” value of likes and followers, signifying the liquid and potentially disloyal character of digital human resources. People can easily support and join groups by clicking “like” and “follow.” However, as easily and quickly as online resources can be mobilized, people may decide to unlike, unfollow, or leave a group. This indicates that digital human resources can quickly be gained but are easy to lose. The actors studied in this chapter developed a series of counterstrategies in order to keep followers and turn them into active participants (cf. Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino, 2020). In fact, to various degrees, all of the groups studied in this chapter managed to keep and stabilize their numbers; moreover, *#jagärhär* successfully encouraged group members to engage, sometimes on a daily basis, by writing comments in threads, liking posts with the hashtag *#jagärhär*, or reporting hateful content on Facebook.

Mobilizing Money Offline and Online

Economic resources constitute a key resource for most civil society actors. As in many European countries, public funding schemes constitute an important part of the basis for funding Swedish civil society organizations, for example, through core program grants or contracts oriented toward delivery of service based on performance. Voluntary associations and foundations have a particular type of institutional support in that they are exempted from tax as long as they have a public purpose and provided that a large proportion of their income is used for internal activities. New policy tools have opened up possibilities for citizens to provide financial support (donations) with some basic tax exemptions. Many (approximately 95,000) of the 250,000 organizations included in the public records are economically active according to the public definition. Their main sources of income, in order of significance, are public grants, sales of goods and services, membership fees and donations, and other transfers (Statistics Sweden, 2018). This suggests that organizations' major income sources are external, deriving from either public grants or sales.

A change in government funding schemes has yielded an orientation toward more contract-based funding and a concept of civil society as a provider of (public) services through various procurement methods (Johansson et al., 2019; Wijkström, 2011). There has been a growing emphasis (above all by the right-wing-led government in office from 2006 until 2014) on promoting civil society as a sub-contractor of public services (ibid.). As such, Sweden fits well into a European trend of civil society actors that are invited and/or expected to step in when the (welfare) state "fails" to deliver (Brandson et al., 2014; De Corte & Versheure, 2014). While this is business as usual in many European countries with much greater diversity in service provision, it can be seen as a significant shift in the Swedish context: among social democratic states, in which the state shoulders the main responsibility for citizens' welfare and needs, Sweden has been ascribed the status of a role model.

Our previous studies have demonstrated the complex funding structure for Swedish civil society organizations (see Scaramuzzino &

Meeuwisse, 2017; Scaramuzzino & Wennerhag, 2019). In a major survey of a representative sample of Swedish civil society organizations, we asked how they valued the significance of different sources of income. Responses demonstrated a complex picture of internal and external sources of income across various levels of government (see Table 12.2). Membership fees were considered the most important. The significance of membership fees can, of course, be interpreted in different ways: in terms of proportion of total income or as a means of illustrating that an organization's beneficiaries care and pay their membership fees. With respect to public grants, it was apparent that local governments constituted the major avenue of income, reflecting the fact that a large majority of Swedish civil society organizations are active at the local level. Least important for them appeared to be EU funding. Donations were important for a large proportion of civil society organizations and were almost on par with local government funding. The above discussion of grants as opposed to contracts is also identifiable in Table 12.2, as sales of goods and services were considered to be of great significance—more so, for instance, than grants from the central government.

The Internet and social media have opened up new possibilities for the mobilization of financial support and the diversification of sources. They have lowered transaction costs and made it easier to collect money, for

Table 12.2 Relevance of funding sources

Sources of income		Very or moderately important (%)	CSOs (N)
Internal funding sources	Membership fees	75	1765
	Sales of goods and services	33	1757
	Return on capital	18	1730
Public grants	Grants from local government	45	1749
	Grants from regional government	20	1736
	Grants from central government	19	1722
	EU grants	3	1709
Private funding sources	Financial support from companies	17	1733
	Donations from individuals	39	1745

Source: Scaramuzzino and Meeuwisse (2017, p. 90), authors' translation

instance, through crowdfunding (Renwick & Mossialos, 2017). Research shows that online actors rely on crowdfunding as large numbers of people donate small amounts of money to campaigns, while the cost of starting a crowdfunding campaign on social media is low (cf. Croeser & Highfield, 2014). For instance, Facebook does not charge for donations to charitable organizations, but the charge for personal crowdfunding campaigns in Sweden is at least 1.56% of the total amount.⁶

The Swedish online actors studied asked for donations from their likers, followers, and/or group members on Facebook. Donations were cultivated with the offer of payment options such as Swish (a Swedish mobile payment system) in order to allow people to easily transfer money. However, at the time of our interview study (from November 2016 to February 2017), the online actors did not appear to consider economic resources particularly important. Because social media use is free of charge, they did not seem to need significant economic resources to run their daily operations. In fact, *Inte rasist men* had more economic resources than needed and largely considered such resources easy to mobilize. One of the online actors, which had received extensive funding from followers, expressed a concern with collecting “too much” in donations. Although their followers wanted to make more donations, the online actors occasionally turned down offers of funding.

This reflects, in part, the particular cases under consideration and the low cost of being active on social media; however, it also reflects the classic civil society view that money is mainly a means to an end and that the mission comes first. *#vistårinteut*, for instance, emphasized: “All donations will go to costs and promotion of campaigns” (Vistårinteut, 2018). *Inte rasist men* also rejected greater internal professionalization, stating: “[...] the editorial office will remain based on volunteering” (Interviewee 1). It also made similar careful judgments in order to avoid risking its followers’ goodwill and trust, forms of symbolic resources cherished more than actual financial support:

People were ready. They had asked for it for several years but we said no, because we did not know what we would do with the money. Such facts have probably been important for these people, that people feel that they [*Inte rasist men*] can be trusted. They do not just receive money for fun;

they only receive money when they have something important to spend it on. I will not mention any figures, but we have received a lot of money and we have not even told our followers what we intend to do with it. We have built up that trust. It is absolutely amazing. At this point, we only manage the money and we are very careful with it. We have basically not touched a penny more than a little for paying for research tools. We are saving the money so we can use it in the upcoming election campaign. We will account for every penny we use. (Interviewee 1)

Money is an important online resource, but perhaps not as important as it is for many formal civil society organizations. The emphasis on using funding carefully can also be interpreted differently. Being active only online and not being registered as a formal organization allows online actors extensive leeway to use financial resources at will. Followers have limited possibilities to hold actors to account, and this is also true for public control instruments as the actors are not registered formal associations. Pledges to use money carefully and only for the benefit of the cause can thus be interpreted as a kind of moral contract between online actors and their followers who donate funding, counterbalancing a lack of formal accountability practices and limited transparency.

While social media offers actors opportunities to mobilize economic resources, this should not be understood as full control over such resource flows. Because online actors are not dependent on government contracts, they are not in the hands of public authorities, but they are largely in the hands of their followers. In the Swedish context, public funding can only be received by formal registered organizations meeting certain standards (such as respect for the ideas of democracy and a democratic structure with annual meetings, financial reports, a postal address, etc.). The public authorities thus intend to ensure that public funds go only to civil society organizations and activities that are compatible with the basic values of Swedish society (2018, Dir. 2018:19).

Mobilization of economic resources on social media comes with great uncertainty. Mobilizing large amounts of money in a short time and planning and controlling such resource flows are challenging tasks. One does not know whether followers and likers will donate again next month or in two months. Interestingly, we find that online actors have largely

started to imitate and replicate formal ways of organizing activities. This includes trying to turn occasional donors into monthly donors and encouraging them to sign up for direct debit (*Inte rasist men*). #jagärhär has pursued a similar strategy, offering “support membership” based on a small annual fee. These forms of actions can be interpreted as attempts to create more stability and control over financial resources, although some of the online actors also stated that they were in fact not in need of additional funds. #jagärhär even decided to set up a formal organization (in the form of an association) as an illustration of its ambition to expand its work, but perhaps also as a way to reduce organizational uncertainty and become eligible for public grants. The two other actors, *Inte rasist men* and #vistårinteut, decided to continue to operate without a formal organization. They attempted to create stable organizations based on voluntary work, which requires quite different approaches to both legitimacy and accountability. Irrespective of the path chosen, online mobilization thus follows a different rationale in terms of leadership accountability. While a slow process of holding associational leaders accountable through annual general assemblies allows members to exert influence in formal associations, accountability practices in online mobilizations take place more rapidly in the forms of unliking and unfollowing.

Offline and Online Political Resources

Political resources constitute another fundamental component in the resource portfolio of most civil society actors. They exist in many forms, for instance, as contacts with politicians, access to policy-making procedures, or the public legitimacy to act on particular political issues; the distinctions between types of resources are sometimes fuzzy, as economic and human resources can be mobilized for political purposes. Expressions and manifestations of civil society in the Swedish context fall back on the regulation in the nation’s constitution, in which freedom of assembly, freedom to demonstrate, and freedom of association are firmly inscribed. While this presupposes basic conditions for individuals to come together and seek to influence societal development without the interference of the state, the principle of free association does not indicate that the state

has refrained from steering and governing (Micheletti, 1995; Trägårdh et al., 2013).

Political resources in this respect follow Sweden's corporatist legacy, that is, systems of institutionalized contact, negotiation, and joint decision-making between the state and societal actors in the preparation as well as the implementation of public policies (Gavelin, 2018; Lundberg, 2017). Institutionalized forms of cooperation (advisory boards, government committees, steering groups, and the like) at various levels of government invite both social partners and civil society actors to consult and negotiate on common issues. Many observers have, however, pointed out that this system has undergone profound changes in recent decades. Despite patterns of more open competition, the principle of cooperation still seems to guide many state–civil society interactions; this can be illustrated by previous years' implementations of compact models—joint agreements in which both public agencies and civil society actors agree to follow certain guiding principles (Johansson et al., 2019).

While this structure provides opportunities for actors to mobilize, such opportunities are not equally distributed, and the possession of political resources (in terms of political access and contacts) varies across segments and types of actors. Contacts with key decision-makers and access to formal decision-making procedures are mainly in the hands of a few large peak organizations and their high-level representatives. They have been invited based on their representational merits; that is, they represent a significant number of people and/or the issue under consideration (Lundberg, 2017). This implies that a few large civil society organizations have benefitted from a corporatist system that provides them with extensive political resources (Lundberg, 2017; Scaramuzzino, 2012).

Participating in consultation processes provides access to other kinds of resources of great value for civil society actors: a cultural competence that accompanies learning the language and manner of politics, building networks with other key representatives, and getting to know politicians personally. Here we find a spillover effect as access to and control over one type of resources can open up further access as well as the possibility to gather and control other types of resources. Political resources—in terms of access and contacts—can, however, backfire, as actors risk being criticized for partnering or becoming too closely affiliated with the state.

This suggests, once again, the fine balance between gaining one type of resource and managing its potential effects on the actors' more symbolic resources of status, prestige, and legitimacy.

While these corporatist structures promote a particular stability and distribution of political resources, the development of social media has changed political debates and political decision-making processes. Politicians have become easier to follow, contact, and access through Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Political resources are intertwined, and online and offline structures can hardly be separated. Civil society actors who engage in political advocacy work are using both online and offline strategies (Johansson & Scaramuzzino, 2019). While the corporatist structure and patterns of cooperation largely confine access and potential influence to a few selected actors, the Internet and social media enable a wider set of actors to make their claims and build alliances and contacts with politicians outside of formal decision-making structures, committees, and conferences. Previous investigations suggest that gaining political influence on the Internet and social media takes place less through negotiations on particular issues and is more distinctly linked to showing, claiming, and marking one's political presence on a particular issue (Johansson & Scaramuzzino, 2019).

Defining one's issue seems to be of key importance for online actors as they attempt to build their political resources. They mobilize around a single issue that they carefully define as not party-political, and this effort is to a large extent made to enable the mobilization of as many people as possible (Karpf, 2012). All interviewees stated that they had been able to quickly gather so many resources in the forms of likes, followers, and/or group members on Facebook primarily for this reason; they organized around a single issue, regardless of political affiliation and political views. It thus appears that online activism benefits from building upon "the lowest common denominator" as a general strategy (Interviewee 1). This has allowed the activists to fine-tune and balance party-political position-takings on highly politicized issues—like racism—and attract both left-wing and right-wing sympathizers. Although social media certainly accentuates political and ideological divides, each of our cases sought to operate across such cleavages as a way to attract interest and build legitimacy beyond everyday political discussions.

However, the desire to avoid being marked as party-political or as following traditional political cleavages has not restricted activists' political ambitions. While they certainly had a presence in digital debates and could influence discussions on the Internet and social media, they also sought influence in a more classic sense. Whereas social media offered them opportunities for extensive human resources as well as economic resources, it is evident that they did not have the same recognition and status as organized civil society if they were active solely on the Internet and social media—even if they represented large groups and had expertise on the issues at stake. In short, at the time of the interviews, none of these online actors seemed to have significant access to formal decision-making procedures.

This manifested itself in different ways among the three cases, but interviewees shared ambitions to become more than online actors, acting more offline in “real” politics and having “real” political influence. In an attempt to expand its political strategies, *#jagärhär* started to work on offline civil courage and created a lapel pin displaying its logo so that people could recognize each other offline in the public sphere as well. They also planned to

[...] hold a lot of lectures and advocate and try to influence and also to inform [...] and also [try] to get involved in different decision making, by giving advice. (Interviewee 2)

To increase its political influence, *#vistårinteut* aimed to develop contacts with as many different actors as possible, including municipalities, social services, and politicians at the national level:

We have sent e-mails to ministers and have been mail bombing them and so on. They know who we are and that we exist; they also know that we are professionals. (Interviewee 3)

#vistårinteut also managed to obtain meetings with ministers, exchanging information and—in the views of this online actor—forming a kind of alliance with the politicians:

They gave a lot of information and strategies for how we can continue our work and so on. It is great if they can give us information and we can give them information, so that we can work from two fronts, methodically and together. Then it is even more important that we communicate the right things outwards. (Interviewee 3)

Inte rasist men developed a different strategy for influencing public opinion and started to run its own campaign for the 2018 election. Following classic advocacy and lobbying strategies, *Inte rasist men* saw itself as aiming to assist those in power to create a politics for change:

We believe that we can actually give to those who actually have the power to change and to create politics for change. We can give them some time, and that is what they need right now. (Interviewee 1)

These ambitions to transform followers and likers into political resources show that there is no simple exchange rate—either between types of resources or from online to offline resources.

Conclusion

The growing significance of online resources for civil society actors has been an ongoing trend for some time, and there is little indication that it will lose momentum. Most Swedish civil society organizations use social media, for instance, to communicate with and recruit new members (Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino, 2017; Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino, 2020) and to engage in advocacy (Johansson & Scaramuzzino, 2019). They also use social media to collect resources (Scaramuzzino, 2017; Scaramuzzino & Meeuwisse, 2019; Turunen & Weinryb, 2017). This suggests a turn toward mobilization of online resources. We argue, however, that this trend is not unidirectional. It is certainly the case that established organizations and associations are shifting their activities to online platforms, yet actors organizing primarily online tend to develop actions outside social media platforms as well. We will most likely see much more of this interactive or integrated style of resource mobilization in the near future, with activities

becoming increasingly integrated and notions of separation between offline and online resources potentially losing significance. This stands in contrast to accounts of civil society and social media that see social media as possibly destructive of social movements, civil society organizations, and civil society. Our study suggests such a position to be analytically misleading, and it is of key importance to move away from a dichotomy perceiving social media as either good or bad and to investigate civil society's use of both online and offline resources.

This chapter shows the benefits of such an integrated approach, as the practices conducted by civil society actors can be interpreted as a complex system of exchange and transaction costs between types of resources (human, financial, and political) and systems of resources (offline and online). We found actors to be engaged in exchanging types of resources. Likes, followers, and group members could potentially be turned into money (crowdfunding) and human resources (likers and followers) into political resources. However, exchanging resources entails costs, and while the organizations we studied managed to mobilize extensive human resources well, we found that these were less easily transformed into political resources in general—and into offline political resources in particular. It thus appears that conversion from online to offline systems is more easily accomplished with some types of resources than others. Highly valued contacts with politicians and decision-makers often seemed to remain out of reach for online actors. In addition, we observed ambitions to improve the value of online resources, turning likes and followers into members or more stable participants. Acting across resources thus appears to put pressure on actors to change not only their methods but also the organization of their work, as exemplified by online actors' increasing efforts to become formal organizations. Acting like an association can be a way to control resources as well as to imitate the classic organizational form of an association.

Online resources' greater speed, volume, and potential fluidity create a divide from offline resources. Moreover, and most importantly, if the timing is right, some actors can quickly mobilize extensive amounts of resources, particularly human resources. We call this a situation of resource abundance (see also Johansson & Scaramuzzino, 2021). Having too much thus appears to be a problem, or at least an issue requiring a series of resource control strategies. Previous research has raised concerns that civil

society organizations struggle to engage their members, even if they employ staff and have the capacity to coordinate engagement. On social media, the opposite problem often occurs: namely, too much engagement and not enough coordination. Mobilizing online, in fact, often does not require any major economic resources, but it does require time, and at some point, time also requires money. In other words, making use of the large-scale engagement available on social media requires a great deal of time and coordination. Furthermore, this not only allows for new discussions on how to capture and conceptualize representation and representativeness; it also offers a new perspective on civil society accountability. Leaders can be held accountable online by individuals not liking, not following, or not sharing their posts. Because of the speed of social media interactions, online leaders also appear to be expected to deliver quick results to their followers.

In sum, the thick, dense institutionalized landscape of organized civil society in the Swedish context has long benefitted from close and cordial relations with the state. The advancement of the Internet and social media allows these actors a parallel but also complementary resource base to develop their activities. It is apparent, though, that actors who benefit from various forms of digital resources largely originate from social media mobilizations and, in turn, seek to bridge the gap to traditional organizing by imitating or even setting up formal organizations. Combining and exchanging types of resources is costly, especially when crossing over from online to offline resource bases. These findings suggest a need to go beyond the stylized distinction between offline and online resources, to investigate the much more complex interplay and integration between them, and to determine how such interactions change established conceptualizations of civil society representation and accountability.

Notes

1. "Not racist, but."
2. "I am here."
3. The full title of the Facebook group is longer and reads as "Vi står inte ut men vi slutar aldrig kämpa" ("We cannot stand it, but we will never give up the struggle").

4. Including foundations, religious congregations, associations, and trade unions.
5. The table draws on a large quantitative dataset resulting from a national survey that received responses from 2791 Swedish CSOs. The survey was carried out in 2012–2013 as part of the research program Beyond the Welfare State: Europeanization of Swedish Civil Society Organizations (EUROCIV), financed by the Swedish Research Council. For more details, see Scaramuzzino and Wennerhag (2015).
6. For details, see Facebook (2019).

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13

St. Petersburg LGBTQI+ Activists Negotiating Financial and Symbolic Resources

Pauliina Lukinmaa

*Who are we: a tree without any roots, or a part of centuries-long resistance
against artificial normalization of bodies, sexualities, and self-expression?
How do we experience the intersection of LGBTI identities and our
religions and traditions?*
—(QueerFest 2018, St. Petersburg, author's translation)

The quotation above was published on a web page of QueerFest,¹ an international human rights festival dedicated to consolidating the LGBTQI+² community, bringing visibility to and celebrating “otherness,” and promoting queer rights through culture and the arts. The event, organized by the local civic initiative group *Vykhod* (“Coming out”) in St. Petersburg, Russia, has taken place annually at the end of September since 2009. Over the years, it has attracted thousands of participants to art exhibitions, theatrical performances, music concerts, discussions, film viewings, etc. In 2018, the

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theme of the festival was “*Ia gorzhus’ moei kul’turoi*” (“I am proud of my culture”), challenging the common perception of LGBTQI+ activism as “a rootless tree” that is external, even alien, to Russian society at large. Such a view has been imposed by the state-supported homophobia and bigotry manifested in legislation—normative acts that target LGBTQI+ activism directly³ or indirectly as part of an overall crackdown on civil society⁴—and reflected in individual hate crimes and detention camps (Kondakov, 2013, 2019a, 2019b).

Like other parts of civil society, lesbian and gay activism in Russia emerged on the wave of democratization and liberalization of the late 1980s and early 1990s, often with strong international support. “Getting out of the closet and into the streets” has long been central to Western LGBTQI+ identity politics (Kulpa & Mizieleńska, 2011; Stella, 2012), reflecting an almost evolutionistic and chronological path for an identarian emancipation of LGBTQI+ people. The development of the LGBTQI+ movement in Russia tells a different story. The post-Soviet civil rights movement that advocated the decriminalization of homosexuality openly criticized the Soviet practices of imprisonment and coercive commitment to mental institutions; it also brought attention to LGBTQI+ people as a forgotten “other Russia” and as a violated minority (Baer, 2009, p. 11; Roldugina, 2018). At the same time, the regime-led panic over sexual citizens resulted in the topic remaining relatively closed (Baer, 2009; Essig, 1999; Gradskova, 2020; Horne et al., 2009; Iarskaia-Smirnova & Verbilovich, 2020).

The post-Soviet society’s “inability to find proper verbal signifiers for new reality and practices” (Forrester et al., 2014, p. 6) was challenged by the collective coming out of LGBTQI+ activists as they rejected the external and highly stigmatizing terms for non-heterosexuals that had originated in Soviet prison slang. Reflecting the hierarchy of convicts, non-heterosexuals were still referred to as *opushchenyi* (degraded ones)—those at the lowest stratum in prisons (Baer, 2009; Essig, 1999; Kuntsman, 2008). Public demonstrations increased in popularity and frequency in Russia and were supported by Euro-American gay movements; the LGBTQI+ activist movement began to employ verbal signifiers from Euro-American gay movements. In addition, in the summer of 1991, a group of gay and lesbian Americans visited Moscow and St. Petersburg;

together with their local counterparts, they organized the first Pride demonstrations, film festivals, discussions and even visits to a prison in attempts to dismantle the Soviet sodomy law (121.1) (Essig, 1999; Franeta, 2004). Participation in transnational networks has remained an important resource, both financial and symbolic, especially when the (often imagined) realities of LGBTQI+ people in the global West were compared to Russian experiences (Baer, 2009; Healey, 2018). At the same time, in the context of a hostile and repressive national framework, such support was available only to a relatively small group of actors. LGBT organizations' ability to build resources (Gagyí & Ivancheva, 2019; Henderson, 2011) resulted in their achieving elite status in the Russian LGBTQI+ movement, evidencing a prioritization of the role of expertise in civil society organizations (Henderson, 2002). In other cases, foreign funders were unable to recognize forms of activism that lacked professional organizing or familiar goals.

Contextual specificities and local needs and desires may be difficult for foreign donors to grasp, and this has been shown to hinder recognition of local activities and, thus, funding (Bogdanova et al., 2018; Clément, 2008). In addition, registering an organization is a complex process and may attract unwanted government attention; an unregistered initiative, however, possesses no bank account and is therefore unable to receive even foreign funding. Research has also shown that organizations receiving financial resources from transnational sponsors may experience tension between internal accountability and accountability to the external funders (Bickham Mendez & Wolf, 2001, p. 726). This reflects how ideas and methods for activism presented by transnational actors may not sufficiently bridge the gap between transnational practicalities and local needs. Against this background, the aim of this chapter is to examine what constitutes the contemporary narrative of LGBTQI+ culture and belonging in St. Petersburg, how it developed, and how it can be used as a foundation for organizing in a decidedly hostile institutional context.

Data for this study come from a larger ethnographic study conducted during approximately seven months between 2017 and 2019 in St. Petersburg, Russia. The study focused on LGBT organizations, initiative groups, and activists in the city as well as those living abroad. The analysis in this chapter draws on interviews and participant observations with

nine subjects who were residing in St. Petersburg and working in both organizations and self-organized groups at the time of the fieldwork. The research participants presented in this text vary in terms of age and background as well as gender and sexual identification. Contacts with the informants were facilitated by my taking part in events organized by their organizations as well as my participation in and volunteer work for self-organizing activist groups. For the sake of informants' safety and the ethical integrity of the research, I do not identify individuals, groups or organizations.⁵ However, it is important to note that three of the interviewees worked as executive or well-known public figures in the three most prominent locally established and transnationally recognized organizations in St. Petersburg. These organizations have approximately three to five full-time employees and two to four part-time or project-based staff members, as well as numerous volunteers who assist on an as-needed basis at different events and projects. The organizations provide various types of support to the LGBTQI+ community (and members of other risk groups, e.g., sex workers) in St. Petersburg and other regions, especially the nearby Leningrad Oblast. Services offered include psychological support, social services to individuals with disabilities, legal aid, and help obtaining access to medical care for people with HIV. The other four interviewees were members of informal initiative groups focusing on art, creativity, and well-being, often relying on less institutional forms of activities and organizing. One interviewee was an active member of a group that focused mostly on public actions. Although I distinguish between organizational employees and self-organizing group participants in this chapter, I do so to consider and compare their processes of acquiring, employing, forming, and sharing resources.

The chapter is organized as follows. I begin by depicting the sources and the role of financial resources within the St. Petersburg LGBTQI+ activist movement. From there I move to present my approach to symbolic resources and their role in studying the movement with an ethnographic research method. I further explore what symbolic resources emerge; examine how they are developed through the hybrid, temporal, and liminal acquisition of different resources; and describe the processes of their development, usage, exchange, and occasional debate by different actors within the St. Petersburg LGBTQI+ movement.

Resources and Transnational LGBTQI+ Networks: Conceptual Framework

Although LGBTQI+ activists and organizations are an important part of transnational human rights advocacy networks, they have scarcely been studied in Russia (for exceptions, see Andreevskikh, 2018; Buyantueva, 2020; Healey, 2018; Kondakov, 2013). Studies have mostly focused on the top-down impacts of anti-gay legislation (e.g., Wilkinson, 2014; Zhabenko, 2019) and often on formally registered civil society organizations (Henderson, 2011; Johnson & Saarinen, 2011; Salmenniemi, 2005). However, in response to scrutiny and restrictions, other organizational forms proliferate in the LGBTQI+ movement, including media and online activism (Andreevskikh, 2018; Gabowitsch, 2016; Johnson & Saarinen, 2011). In the context of increasing informal organizing (see Bederson & Semenov, Chap. 7 in this volume), it is an especially important scientific endeavor to understand the shaping of the exchange, adaptation, negotiation, and contestation of different resources within the LGBTQI+ movement and between the movement and its environment. I argue here that the interplay between economic and symbolic resources plays a vital role in these processes.

As mentioned above, the crackdown on Russian civil society in general and state-led discrimination against LGBTQI+ activists and organizations in particular have resulted in a depletion of financial resources over the last two decades. In this context, immaterial resources, such as symbols of solidarity and/or belonging, discourses, myths, identities, and knowledge remain available as they still travel across borders rather easily (Cohen, 1986; Kulpa & Mizelińska, 2011). Activists' transnationality is established through personal contacts with foreign and mobile Russian activists (Lukinmaa & Berezkin, 2019) but also via different sources of information available online. These have encouraged St. Petersburg activists to develop skills in generating new resources to pursue their goals locally. In this study, I approach the concept of symbolic resources as an example of the hybridization process of cultures and identities (Kulpa & Mizelińska, 2011; Morozov & Rumelili, 2012) and consider its role within the dynamics of the movement in St. Petersburg. Symbolic

resources hold particular significance locally (Cohen, 1986; Geertz, 1973; Wagner, 1975). Pierre Bourdieu defined symbolic capital as a credit, as power granted to those who have “obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 23). Activists employ ideas that come from people who hold symbolic capital and consider them an inspiration for their activism as well as for growing their own symbolic resources in the long term.

Different types of capital (economic, cultural, social, political) may (to different degrees) hold symbolic importance as long as they receive explicit or practical recognition (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 242) among the collectives. Cultural capital is particularly likely to evolve into symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 245). An example of a symbolic resource may be a collective reading and discussion of texts by Russian-speaking queer authors who hold symbolic capital within the collectives and even in the society. Well-known queer poets such as Sophia Parnok, Marina Tsvetaeva, Mikhail Kuzmin, and Zinaida Gippius, as well as their social circles, provide cultural inspiration for forming symbolic resources. The lively salon culture of these poets, with its attendant debates, helps activists to consider LGBTQI+ activism as something taking place in semi-public surroundings as well as in the streets. Activists may opt to structure their activities as *kvartirniks*,⁶ a familiar form of semi-public gathering in existence since the times of monarchist Russia. These link LGBTQI+ activists to the strong literary culture and the long history of dissident and queer collectives in Russia and the Soviet Union (Ekonen, 2014; Roldugina, 2018); they also connect them to the transnational queer activists for whom creating safe spaces for sharing, possible emancipation, and momentous world-making is often considered vital (Kyrölä, 2018; Muñoz, 1999).

Analysis of these symbols aids in the recognition of certain types of organizational texture that, while immaterial, are functionally essential for civil activities that may not have or even need typical resources such as offices, staff, printed materials, and the like. A few important empirical studies on LGBTQI+ subjects in various locations in Russia have focused on localized knowledge and practices among people who share rather similar sociohistorical backgrounds and current operating environments (Andreevskikh, 2018; Horne et al., 2009; Roldugina, 2018; Stella, 2012;

Stella & Nartova, 2015). Nevertheless, the development and usage of both transnational and local resources have not yet been studied in detail. I consider ethnographic research aiming for a close view of local subjects' navigation within the movement and its symbols to be crucial in this attempt. My ethnographic analysis develops my assertion that the rather restricted operating environment may enable new approaches to LGBTQI+ activism that can destabilize (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006; Morozov & Rumelili, 2012; Wiedlack, 2017) the West-centrism of current transnational LGBTQI+ activism (Kulpa & Mizielińska, 2011; Suchland, 2011) and create symbolically important resources for the movement both locally and transnationally. Subsequently, I introduce the organizations and self-organized activist groups depicted in this chapter through ethnographic material collected during my observation of and participation in several activities with the activists.

The Puzzle of Local Legislation, Activism, and Foreign Funding: Creating New Tactics

The shrinking space for LGBTQI+ activism in contemporary Russia has meant restricted financial resources from transnational advocacy networks. Due to the hardships of a repressive context and the difficulty of acquiring financial support, the possible boundaries between formal LGBT organizations and informal groups in St. Petersburg are being crossed with increasing frequency. The interviews showed that when organizations and groups were still receiving transnational funding, they did not publicly share their donors' names, the amounts received, or other financial details. This firstly indicates the tense nature of the operating environment. It may also reveal a sense of loyalty to the donors, a long-term commitment, or at least a wish to build such a commitment on the part of the recipient organizations. Furthermore, revealing such information could risk essential sources of financial aid or the donors themselves and could even lead to an organization's labeling as "undesirable" [*nezhelatel'nye NKO*] (cf. Bederson & Semenov, Chap. 7 in this volume). Ivan, coordinator of one of the few initiatives that received

direct funding from foreign donors, described the sensitivity of the transnational cooperation and the current culture of fear surrounding it:

- Ivan: And we worked with XX [supranational organ] of course and XY [another supranational organ], but XY asked us not to mention in open research that they help [a specific LGBTQI+ group] in Russia. Because they are trying to show that they work only on educational issues in Russia.
- Pauliina: What does that mean in practice?
- Ivan: It means that they help with some educational exchange programs, but the other side is that they provide financial support for LGBTQI+ groups.
- Pauliina: So not directly?
- Ivan: Yes, not directly. So [officially] they supported us with some courses, and with some brochures. (Ivan, 6 April 2018)

According to both activists and representatives of formal organizations, donors often have a certain amount of funding earmarked for self-organized local groups. Nevertheless, access to funding is not easy to obtain and is, moreover, susceptible to the geopolitical situation. This further increases the vulnerability of the groups' funding. Another interlocutor, Olesya, expressed her frustration about the inequality of access to financial resources combined with the inconsistency of legislative amendments:

Laws are changing on a daily basis, undesirable NGOs, they put Soros on the list. Soros was funding really all NGOs, those who were working on civil society. And that of course increases the competition between the NGOs for the funding that is still available. And you can't get the state funding. It goes to the pseudo or nationalist groups, conservative ones, or the Orthodox Church, which get huge grants from the state. (Olesya, 30 July 2017)

Despite her group's being privileged to receive rather steady foreign financial funding, unlike Ivan's group, Olesya's comment reflects the discrepancy in funding opportunities for different civil society organizations in Russia. One instance is the growing role of the Presidential Grants as a

sponsor or even funder of certain civil society organizations in Russia, which excludes LGBTQI+-focused as well as many other human rights-focused organizations (Skokova & Fröhlich, Chap. 3 in this volume). The restrictions on accessing financial resources and the constant concern about possibly being under surveillance have created a culture of suspicion among the local organizations and their supporters. In addition, both organizations and groups are currently developing new forms of fundraising online and even offline in Russia.

Some organizations have also officially ceased to exist as organizations in Russia. They are now registered in different forms, for example, as for-profits. Olesya, director of an LGBT organization, describes the situation as follows:

We don't have an NGO anymore; it has closed down. Many NGOs have closed down. People are being funded in different ways, have different legal statuses in order to get around these legal frames, the foreign agent law. Some escape completely, go to other sectors, mostly to business. Some NGOs have closed down but reopened in different forms. Some people work individually. The climate strongly influences what's happening. [...] [I]t's slowing progress down. Of course, on a professional level, it's difficult to find professional people, like a PR person. If there is someone talented, they prefer to go to business, where they are better paid. (Olesya, 30 July 2017)

Olesya's organization is no longer registered as one, although its long-term activities did not change considerably after it was labeled a "foreign agent." Moreover, its role within the movement continues to be remarkable: it still organizes one of the biggest internationally acknowledged LGBT-themed events in Russia. However, the overall situation is far from easy, and the group's activities and advocacy efforts directed toward possible stakeholders are more restricted than before. Due to its long-term cooperation with international sponsors and the mutual trust that it has managed to build, the change of its legal status has had a relatively minor impact on its funding from international donors. Due to restrictive legislation and suspicion from officials, registration is out of the question for many civil activists. The boundaries between the criteria for civil society

organizations and initiatives have thus become increasingly fluid (see Bederson & Semenov, Chap. 7 in this volume).

The organization where Olga worked was using its position to offer funding for initiatives and organizations in regions that share their goals in LGBTQI+ activism. Here, too, the negotiations over symbolic resources are the most vivid:

You probably know that LGBT initiatives aren't legal entities. So they cannot get money directly. We are kind of a hub this way. We have a special program; activists from the regions can make applications. So, for example, if someone wants to do training or publish something, we provide money for that. (Olga, 22 November 2017)

Operating in a repressive legislative environment has further mobilized organizations and groups, increased their expertise, and encouraged them to interrogate their symbolic resources. Likewise, it has helped to bring them closer to the broader local civil society.

At that time [in 2008 upon forming the organization] it was all quite isolated, because civil society did not really accept us [LGBTQI+ activists]. We couldn't go to any general human rights events. The organizer of these events, the Human Rights Council of St. Petersburg, didn't particularly welcome us either. And only in 2013, when the campaign on the draft law [national legislation of the 'anti-gay propaganda law'] began, then—in a way because of it—the [local] human rights community began to get seriously involved and support us. (Oksana, 30 August 2017)

The process that Oksana described forced the movement to reconsider its local approach to advocating for LGBTQI+ issues. When LGBTQI+ activists' isolation from civil society became a public and governmental topic for negotiation, it also touched upon something symbolically valuable within civil society. Today, organizations and activists engage increasingly in dialogue with representatives of organizations and activists from other spheres as well as with journalists from the local media. The skills and knowledge gained in this challenging context have been put to use and recognized, at least by the other civil society actors and a limited

number of other actors. Interestingly, as is further elaborated upon in the next section, this use and recognition also opened up possibilities for activists and the surrounding society to relate to each other by means of locally constructed symbolic resources.

Developing Symbolic Resources

The present-day situation for LGBTQI+ people and activism in Russia has made coming-out initiatives such as street protests truly dangerous. It is also important to remember that these events continue to take place at the moment of the writing of this chapter, though the activists are generally very aware of legislation and the possibility of violence. Many activists have spent several days together, reflecting and supporting each other after the profound experiences of aggression that were commonplace during the period from 2011 to 2015. They continue to take care of each other, though some have fled the country. For example, those who remain take food and other supplies to their friends being held in police custody. Oksana described her experiences of recent twists and turns for the movement as follows:

When the events around the legislation, the law on propaganda took place, and then immediately the foreign agent law appeared, as well as a list of undesirable organizations [...] It all happened like in a dream. We just worked, worked; went to the actions; prepared new actions; worked with volunteers, with the guys who barely survived several forms of aggression; helped the families. (Oksana, 30 August 2017)

In this situation, the activists in St. Petersburg turned inward to what is perceived as a domestic tradition of self-expression and solidarity (Shlapentokh, 1990). In addition to offline activities, online discussions took place along with expressions of support and solidarity. These discussions increasingly centered on the well-being of the activists and aimed to create temporary safe spaces for reflection on what had happened, how they were feeling, and what the future would hold. This, in turn, activated the discussion of symbolic resources. As the streets were not open

for the activists as they had been before, new ideas were created. As a result, activists created self-organized groups, also offline, that would be specially by them and for them, freeing them from accountability to anyone outside the community. Safety and sensitivity to personal space became a symbolic resource within these groups as well as a symbolic boundary between their sense of similarity to difference and the dominant coming-out narrative of the global LGBTQI+ movement (Cohen, 1986).

The concept of an “Open Space” for the abovementioned annual QueerFest manifested, in a way, the organizers’ recognition of this change in 2014. Open Space invited independent activists and groups, both local and from other Russian regions, and, since 2016, Russian-speaking activists and groups located in other former Soviet countries. The QueerFest organizers selected participants by means of an open competition with an online format. This call may have been initiated due to the festival’s financial limitations; nevertheless, it managed to successfully increase the festival’s inclusivity of new identifications, activities, discussions, initiatives, and self-organized groups. In return, the locally, nationally, and internationally recognized QueerFest provided space and visibility for them, thus aiding in the development of various new collectives. According to my observations during the event, the Open Space activities were very popular and were valued by activists. They brought new, relatable, and at times refreshing utopian discussions and approaches to LGBTQI+ issues, activism, and their relationships to the surrounding society. These topics did not become part of organizations’ activities, but they were often picked up by local activists. They were often organized by their fellow activists, motivated by genuine interest and mostly without financial support. Today, it seems questionable to depict these sub-events in the frame of Open Space when, in fact, these external initiators present a majority of the QueerFest program.

References to and the use of context-specific discourses is often combined with global symbols and attributes of the global LGBTQI+ movement. QueerFest still includes itself in the global network of Pride parade organizers, relying on the concept of European Pride and LGBTQI+ movements, and does not challenge the Pride concept.

The concept of QueerFest lies in European Prides: cultural and human rights events lasting for a week and culminating with a demonstration. In the Russian context, however, instead of a march, there is a concert in support of the LGBT+ communities in Russia. (QueerFest 2019)

The local context made it necessary for the organizers to specify the event and employ different symbolisms and forms. This similarly reveals the pitfall of the dominant transnational and abstracted traveling concepts, methods, and ideas for LGBTQI+ activism: they may be unsuitable for certain locations, and some forms of LGBTQI+ activities are not recognized (Kulpa & Mizielińska, 2011; Stella, 2012). Skillful navigation within these challenges and possibilities could be enhanced as a symbolic resource and refer to the need for diverse methods of activism grounded in the context of specific locations (Lotman, 2009). Inessa, who coordinates her own initiative, expressed her contentedness with the diversifying movement as reflected in self-organized groups:

Today there are so many small groups, which is absolutely great, actually. And many of them are not looking to become institutionalized organizations. They just get together and do whatever they want, and then maybe decide not to do it anymore, and that's it. And this is a really healthy attitude. (Inessa, 17 July 2017)

The activists' groups and collectives organize several activities ranging from dance therapy, queer poetry, queer hip-hop, and queer rap to master classes in art and so on. Inga [they/them] has several gender-nonconforming art projects. During the last year, they have been invited to do performances both around and outside Russia. Currently, Inga organizes different art-focused activities in St. Petersburg and abroad.

I have a movement, I express my kind of energy, expression, aggression, anger, all this. And for this, hip-hop is a good style. And I think that maybe it's not bad, even if white people use hip-hop, because you do your own hip-hop. Your hip-hop. For me, you know, we have such a situation [the silencing of LGBTQI+ people] in Russia. That's how it is. I am in such a situation, you know, and my friends too. I can just take it and translate it into rap. (Inga, 2 December 2018)

Inga tried volunteering for one of the local LGBT organizations; however, they found that the activities were not inclusive enough. According to Inga, there is a demand for spaces that allow and encourage the articulation of shared identities and experiences within safe boundaries (Stella, 2012, p. 1843). Similar ideas of grassroots community-building are visible in gender-non-binary activist Ivy's comment:

We kind of have disagreements about that [place to gather], because different people prefer different types of interaction. Some people are comfortable at the office of [local LGBT organization] because there are no other people. There is also no danger of being disclosed, while other people feel that the office is too official, and they can't totally relax there. [...] People want to be freer. And we also want to have parties, like *kvartirniks*. But not everybody is so comfortable going to these parties. So, we are trying to use different formats so that people can come, well, perhaps not every time, but when they are comfortable with the format. (Ivy, 24 March 2018)

Activists' artistic engagements also include poetry, both related to LGBTQI+ experiences and written by people outside the community. Moreover, classic Russian and Soviet authors can also be included in poetry readings, as Ivy explains:

[A]t first we had solely queer or at least lesbian poems, but now people choose the poems that speak to them despite the fact that they may not exactly be poems by queers or lesbians. They read poems from the Silver Age, but also from late Soviet literature—poems that speak to queer and gender non-conforming people. Participants write and publish their own poems online. (Ivy, 3 December 2018)

Experimentation with language and the search for forms of expression that do not comply with heteronormativity have led to the introduction of linguistic forms widely used in the international LGBTQI+ movement. For instance, some of the poets' group participants apply the singular pronoun "they" [*oni*] in their own writing and use poetry as a means for normalizing this practice, demonstrating that what to some people may sound "complicated and unfamiliar" does not "sound bad, because it actually sounds good." Moreover, re-translation (and reinterpretation)

of previously translated works of poetry become a part of the mission of overcoming heteronormative censorship and coming closer to the original authors' intentions (cf. Baer, 2011). This way, they tie the works to the surrounding society while also encouraging society to move in a direction that might also welcome them.

Some initiatives use creative tactics for open resistance and, in this way, take an active part in local discussions. One of their activists described their tactics as follows:

We just do not have the resources, for example, for some advertising that costs money. We do not have the means to publish books. And we are trying to use cheap ways. Cheap in the sense that, for example, we communicate with the press through some interesting actions. And then the press writes about you. And therefore...we have some very provocative things like [the demonstration *Gei za Putina*]. (Igor, 8 April 2018)

Igor refers to a tongue-in-cheek LGBTQI+ demonstration, Gays for Putin, that began as a response to a homophobic presidential campaign ad in early 2018 and aimed at drawing attention both to discrimination against the LGBTQI+ community and to civil rights violations in general. At the time of the interview, Igor was organizing several street actions with his peers, selecting current discussions from the government-sponsored mass media and traveling around the country to raise awareness of the LGBTQI+ issues among the public. Igor and his peers were also taking part in other actions with their rainbow flags and other LGBTQI+ symbols. They do this because “no one else [in the movement] does this” and because “we like to do them [street actions].” Igor considers that local LGBTQI+ groups exaggerate the aggression taking place in the streets. According to him, passers-by generally “do not care—because there are so many social and economic problems, and because LGBTQI+ issues are not interesting to most” (Igor, 8 April 2018). It was also for this reason that Igor wished to do something bold, to make people aware that among them live Russian LGBTQI+ citizens who care about and stand for varied topics, not only LGBTQI+ rights.

Furthermore, many activists have migrated to St. Petersburg from the provinces. Some were already active in their hometowns and have

experience with LGBTQI+ activism in different surroundings as well as with attempts to mobilize local LGBTQI+ people. For them, it is important to include those LGBTQI+ people who are willing to mobilize in the provinces. Some have formed groups that organize both online and offline activities; some, like Igor, have visited different towns to conduct workshops and other activities. The issue of the representation of experiences from locations other than major metropolitan areas is an important motivation for activists coming from more peripheral geographical areas.

Even though many of these creative engagements are perceived to be necessitated by the lack of other resources, they become a valuable resource in their own right. When meeting with their partners from foreign LGBTQI+ and other organizations, Russian activists no longer accept the status of learners. They consider their own context-specific expertise and experience to be as relevant to broader transnational advocacy networks as that of their foreign partners, although it may not be necessarily recognized as such by those partners. For instance, Oleg organizes activists' trips to Pride Weeks around Europe and argues:

If earlier those organizations could teach [us] something new, now, well, at least, according to my experience, we [the organization that Oleg represents] can already share our experience and train others. (Oleg, 2 August 2017)

The varied, experimental, and creative activities planned by the organizations and especially the grassroots, self-organized groups discussed in this chapter show both the solid status of the movement in St. Petersburg and the developing symbolic resources of the city's LGBTQI+ activists. Due to the multiple challenges imposed by the controversialities of local and transnational resources and approaches, the activists have developed new forms of activism and new skills for carrying it out. These collectively recognized, symbolically important immaterial resources have changed the relationships between and the roles of the organizations and groups within the movement. Such negotiations and changes may also enable activists to become recognized as transnationally visible, resourceful civil society actors.

Symbolic Resources Negotiated

Against the background of recent years' restricted operating environment for LGBTQI+ activism in Russia, I argue in this chapter that activists' entrepreneurial creation of new approaches and tactics to create symbolically important resources has led St. Petersburg's LGBTQI+ activists to develop a more locally grounded, coherent, and solid movement. In this environment, the activists have turned to resources rarely associated with civil society organizing, such as those traditionally associated with the visual arts, literature, and dance, and recontextualized them as instruments for social mobilization, providing content and organizational form for activities.

Most foreign financial resources are available to organizations that operate according to the same types of practices and principles that their sponsors do. LGBTQI+ organizations that receive steady foreign funding from such institutionalized partners as ILGA reflect their belonging to the transnational queer movement through their practices, formats, and symbols. Their activities are also planned long-term and are aimed at attracting possible (though at the moment scarce) allies in Russia, a practice familiar in transnational activist movements. At the same time, the number of self-organizing informal groups is growing due to the local hardships facing those who wish to form registered organizations. Apart from transnational symbols, these groups seek and employ somewhat unusual resources for LGBTQI+ activism. Moreover, publicity is not necessarily important for their activism; they develop activities by and for themselves. At times, this may also involve radical public activism. These practices reflect their confidence on having at least temporary symbolic resources. Criticism of both local and transnational activist movements is common in these groups. At the same time, these grassroots groups' practices may end up being or may intentionally be short-term, making their approaches more experimental and even utopian. The importance of such approaches is increasingly acknowledged by the organizations, reflecting the growing exchange of different resources between them.

Thanks to local negotiations during these times of hardship, transnational resources have not simply been accepted as unidirectional, moving

from “advanced” Western civil society actors toward “backward” Eastern Europe (Boatcă, 2006; Kangas & Salmenniemi, 2016; Kulpa & Mizelińska, 2011). Rather, liminal processes have emerged in which different groups negotiate and debate the transnationally imposed symbols carried by resources while localizing and domesticating them. Transnational queer symbols and practices are used by the activists, but more importantly, they are negotiated and translated in order to relate them more closely to local features and even convert them into fundraising opportunities, either through crowdfunding platforms or social media campaigns and spot donation requests. Such approaches are especially frequently used by the self-organizing groups. Similar processes have also been taking place with more local resources. The symbolic resources of successful LGBTQI+ activism offer very valuable information for local organizations as well as resources both for reciprocal discussion with the surrounding society and for transnational advocacy networks and movement donors.

Alongside forms of practices and spaces, different skills such as writing and other means of artistic expression also hold symbolic value in the activist movement. Russian activists have been educated at schools and, in some cases, universities in a country with a powerful literary culture. Famous Russian works of literature have thematized the dream of liberation from various authoritarian political regimes—regimes that are as unavoidable as “bad Russian weather” (Boym, 2010, p. 81). In addition to transnational queer symbols, activists turn to varied symbols that have been employed by dissidents over decades, if not centuries, of Russian history. These resources can refer to practices such as forming groups for thematic discussions and communities of debates, solidarity, and sharing. Such practices take place in various semi-public settings such as the salons of the Silver Age or the *kvartirniks* held from Soviet times to the present day. They are based on the familiar Soviet principle of relying on trusted personal circles. At the same time, this principle has become familiar to the activists from the transnational queer movements in the format of safe spaces. The St. Petersburg LGBTQI+ movement organizes itself through multiple layers of networks, and as in previous eras, the information and personal experiences shared in activists’ *kvartirniks* are not to be spread beyond the walls of those spaces and social circles.

These various symbolic resources are also sources of identification and belonging for the activists. The acquiring, employing, forming, and exchanging of those resources reflect the fact that the culture of the LGBTQI+ movement does not form a bounded spatial territory. Rather, different boundaries pass through it at many points, rendering the culture a border zone with multiple layers of networks rather than a closed, self-sufficient system. In the long run, St. Petersburg LGBTQI+ activists' symbolic resources may be useful as an asset on a transnational level. Hopefully, this can form a basis for discussions around the decentralization of West-centric transnational LGBTQI+ activism and efforts to effect it (Kulpa & Mizielińska, 2011; Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006; Morozov & Rumelili, 2012; Suchland, 2011; Wiedlack, 2017). In so doing, activists may reveal the constant intersection between the local and the global, simultaneously permitting local culture to flourish (Lotman, 2009) and activists to carve a space for themselves within it.

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Notes

1. <https://queerfest.ru/en/>
2. I use the acronym LGBTQI+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex) to refer to the broader movement in which the research participants were active, although individual groups might identify with different acronyms. I am aware that the simple “+” is far from resolving the challenge of the othered gender and sexual minorities and the problems of homonormativity, transphobia, and biphobia which also exist within LGBTQI+ movements. In referring to specific organizations, I follow their selected acronym, which for the moment is “LGBT.” I have not changed the acronyms that the research participants used in the interviews.
3. Federal Law No. 135-FZ “On amendments to Article 5 of the federal law ‘On protecting children from information harmful to their health and development’ and separate legislative acts of the Russian Federation with

- the purpose of protecting children from information advocating rejection of traditional family values.”
4. Federal Law No. 121-FZ “On amendments to specific legal acts of the Russian Federation with regard to regulation of activities of nonprofit organizations performing functions of ‘foreign agents,’” 20 June 2012 (see Bederson & Semenov, Chap. 7 in this volume for more details). Federal Law No. 54-FZ “On gatherings, rallies, demonstrations, marches and picketing,” 19 June 2004.
 5. Pseudonyms have been used to protect anonymity of all interviewees. Upon request by the interviewee, I also mention the person’s gender identification (e.g., Inga uses a gendered name while identifying as gender non-conforming, in this case using the pronouns “they/them”). Interviewees who were more active in self-organizing groups, initiatives, are pseudonymized with names starting with the letter “I” (Inessa, Inga, Igor, and Ivy). Those who were working for organizations at the moment of interview are referred to with pseudonyms beginning with the letter “O” (Oksana, Oleg, Olesya, and Olga).
 6. The term *kvartirnik* does not have a direct English equivalent. It refers to a gathering of a mutually trusted and more or less like-minded group of people at the home of one or several members of the collective in order to create a somewhat private yet communal event.

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14

Epilogue: Relational Resource Constellations

Apostolis Papakostas

Two social facts that at first appear contradictory are universally accepted in studies of civil society. On one hand, individual participation in membership-based associations has been gradually declining for several decades in many countries (Skocpol, 2003; Tranvik & Selle, 2007). On the other hand, the number of civil society organizations, including membership-based associations, has increased (Casey, 2016). Earlier studies examined the first trend in light of the process of individualization of civil engagement or a strategic cultivation by liberalizing ideologies. The individualization thesis implies that traditional forms of organizing collective action do not align with contemporary reflexive rationality (van Deth & Maloney, 2012), while neoliberalization is blamed for eroding traditional conceptions of social solidarity and stimulating sporadic forms of engagement around specific issues, which does not translate into a sustained commitment to organizations (Grubb & Henriksen, 2019).

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The second trend, the significant growth in the number of organizations, has been seen as part of the overall increase in the role of highly qualified paid professionals, with increased bureaucracy and managerialism permeating civil society and, as I have argued elsewhere, dismantling the very institution of membership as a form of affiliation with organizations (Papakostas, 2011). Although such so-called memberless organizations are easier to create than their traditional counterparts, the nature of the resources required for their sustainability is substantially different: without the contributions of members, they generate resources externally. As a result, new boundaries of exclusion and hierarchies arise between organizations and their (now detached) social base.

This volume suggests approaching the complexity and dynamism of civil society, illustrated by but not limited to the trends outlined above, by capturing and conceptualizing how resources are accumulated by civil society organizations, what role they play, and how they intertwine with the constant changes (sometimes incremental, sometimes dramatic) taking place in organizational forms, activities, and norms. This epilogue¹ is inspired by the richly detailed empirical and theoretical chapters that precede it and offers a general reflection on their contribution to the existing literature as a collective effort.

The contributions that make up this volume map the landscape of civil society by combining theoretical and empirical insights drawn primarily from two research paradigms. The first is the resource mobilization perspective, often referenced in research on contemporary social movements and launched in a seminal work by American sociologists John McCarthy and Mayer Zald (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). These authors based their research primarily on developments in American civil society; their insights, however, influenced research in many countries, with hundreds of publications on the subject. Theirs was a sound sociological response to then-prevailing theories that sought to understand social movements as irrational responses stemming from participants' psychological motives. There were, according to adherents of the perspective, many facets of unjustness or deprivation in societies, but only a few were given expression and were transformed into social movement organizations. The availability of resources and the capacities of social movement actors to

use them were thus enabling factors that expanded the scope of, and the space available for, social movement organizations.

The other perspective is the resource dependency approach, which stems from organization theory and is one of the offspring of the organization–environment contingency theory in organization studies. It, too, was launched in the late 1970s, by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik in a book and several articles and book chapters (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The logic of the argument is, to some extent, similar to that used by proponents of resource mobilization theory: organizations in general (not only civil society organizations) that are effective in securing resources from their environments are the ones that survive. But, instead of being an enabling factor, resources create costs and pressures and set limitations as organizations become dependent on their environments. This external dependence becomes a constraint as no organization is self-contained; it is an organization's adjustment to its environment that allows it to survive. And as organizations do not control the resources in their environments, the environment (comprised mainly of other organizations such as states, donors, enterprises, etc.) becomes a key determinant of the activities of a given organization.

The realm of civil society organizations is too variegated, dynamic, and multilayered to be captured by such general theoretical perspectives. The processes described by the abovementioned perspectives treat the realm of civil society as if it were a rather homogenous field encompassing similar forms of mobilizing and organizing. I believe that both perspectives' shortcomings stem from the unsystematized typologizing of the sociological qualities of the resources involved and their relations to the organizational forms in civil society. Highlighting fragments of some of the rich empirical accounts in this volume, I will sketch some contours of how such relational typologies may be developed.²

While their work is informed by the two perspectives discussed here, the authors of this book have used the flows of resources through the realm of civil society in order to bypass the perspectives' theoretical limitations. The methodological device used in this book is to posit the movement of resources into, within, and out of civil society organizations, as well as interactions between them, as a contrast medium to demonstrate transformations of civil society in Poland, Russia, and Sweden. It has

enabled the authors to understand how the space of civil society action can be both expanding and shrinking as resources enable and constrain their capabilities, legitimacy, and identity, and as organizations use different constellations of resources, employ them for different purposes, and relate to different stakeholders.

In previous research, resources are defined in rather simple descriptive terms: monetary, human, symbolic, etc. (Hardy & Maguire, 2017). This volume demonstrates that exploring the nature and the relational sociological qualities of the mobilized and used resources can provide some clues as to how to understand this dynamic field. Resources can make organizations dependent on their environments, but they also offer varying degrees of exchangeability. For instance, one sociological quality of resources is the relationship of the resource to its donor or to its bearer. It is not uncommon for civil society organizations to receive considerable amounts of resources from wills or donations from the general public. In such cases, the resource is separated from the donor and can be used by the organization with a certain degree of freedom as it can be stored or transformed into other types of resources. When a labor resource is provided by volunteers or organization members, however, the work is not separated physically from the donor and is consumed at the time it is delivered. It is bound to a specific person and cannot be stored or easily transformed into other types of resources, although it can be used to accumulate additional members or funds. In this case, the constraints are of another type than in the previous example.

From the historical perspective, as societies become more monetarized, financial resources become more available to civil society and are, to a degree, concentrated. At the same time, dense institutional structures become available and can be used as frames or platforms without restrictions or requirements on the part of the stakeholders. For instance, the Internet is a resource that can be used by any civil society organization at very low cost. Moreover, not all of the resources that organizations use must stem from the environment. They can even be mobilized within an organization; organizations can, for instance, request that members contribute their own work or pay extra fees. By mobilizing resources from inside the organization and its social base, as for instance in membership-based organizations, an organization can avoid environmental dependence as the institution of membership renders the social base an internal part

of the organization. It is striking how easily the organizations described in this volume can reorient strategies and activities. Reading the detailed chapters of the volume with care, one can observe that the notion of membership is absent. Informal participation, volunteering, professionals, avant-garde professionals, and networks are terms that describe the forms of engagement in most of the organizations studied. The correspondence between memberless organizations and the transformativity of the same organizations in civil society is rather apparent (Papakostas, 2011). This is more obvious in professional organizations as they seem to be able to adjust to changing funding opportunities with greater ease.

With reference to the relationship between the sources of mobilized resources and the organizational forms taken by civil society, I have developed a typology of the organizational space of civil society (Table 14.1). It suggests that membership-based organizations are not dependent on their environments as they mobilize their human resources and economic contributions from within the organization. The resources' inseparability from their physical bearers creates organizational stability. An organization thus gains autonomy from its environment, but the choices that can be made are dependent on the will, attitudes, or ideology of its members. Donation-gathering organizations, on the other hand, do not have this type of problem as they mobilize their resources primarily by means of small monetary contributions from the general public. And as small contributors are exchangeable and money can easily be transformed into

Table 14.1 Relational constellations of civil society resources

		SOURCE OF RESOURCES	
		Inside the organization	Outside the organization
DENSITY OF RESOURCES	Dispersed, many contributors or donors	Membership	Donation-gathering
	Concentrated, a few contributors or donors	Cadre	Foundation

Source: Adapted from Papakostas (2011)

other types of resources, these organizations are relatively independent of particular actors in their environment and have greater scope of action and possibilities to reorient their strategies and activities.

The typology can be seen as a first step toward understanding the polymorphous role played by the relational aspects of resources in accommodation, in contestation, and in the decisions civil society organizations take in the context of strategic orientation or adaptation. I elaborate the typology by introducing two additional dimensions: the *generalizability/specificity* of resources, that is, the degree to which they can be used in various organizational forms and activities, and the *convertibility* of resources, that is, the degree to which one resource can be exchanged for another (see Table 14.2). On the whole, the specificity of resources increases when resources are transformed for specific uses or purposes inside the organization.

Money cannot buy everything, but it is probably the resource that can be most easily converted to other resources: to purchase organizational material base, to hire staff and invest in their training, to transmit values through information campaigns, or to engage lobbyists. Economic resources can be a source of freedom for civil society organizations: as a generalizable resource, money is used universally by most types of organizations with different missions, beneficiaries, and target groups, and the abundance of other resources can often be conducive to accumulating funding. Conversion and substitution can often occur simultaneously; money enables an organization to adopt a more professional or institutional stance and marginalize the voice of the members. The case of the Swedish rural movement described by Anette Forsberg is illustrative here. As the European Structural Funds became available, a growth discourse evolved that marginalized the contesting nature and holistic discourse of

Table 14.2 The sociological aspects of resources

		Generalizability			
		Economic resources	Institutional resources		
Convertibility, high		Human resources /Professionals	Human resources /Members		Convertibility, low
		Specificity			

local community development (Chap. 5). A similar process is described by Lisa Kings in her account linking the transformation of Save the Children Sweden to the availability of specific funding and highlighting its development from a membership-based popular movement into an organization based on avant-garde professionalism (Chap. 8).

Transformation and adaptation are among the principal mechanisms by means of which money can impact civil society organizations; a third important mechanism, described by organization population sociologists as “niche selection” (Scott, 2004), takes place through institutional regulation and is thus environmental. The generalizability of institutional norms is reflected in their influence on organizational fields, transcending organizational forms and missions. However, when institutional norms and an organization’s commitment to its mission clash, the limitations of the convertibility of commitment as a symbolic resource reveal themselves (cf. Chap. 4). When states become major financing sources of civil society organizations, packages of requirements, scrutiny, and/or surveillance accompany the funding. Such packages, formulated as soft governance steering in liberal democracies or as arbitrary laws in the case of authoritarian states, are suitable for organizations with certain characteristics, but they exclude others. Selection creates stratification among organizations in each country’s civil society and fragmentation within individual organizations. The case of equinomia in Sweden and the decrees and laws associated with the Presidential Grants in Russia exemplify the point (see Chaps. 1 and 3).

On the other hand, the low convertibility of some resources can be compensated for, at least partially, by the greater convertibility of others. Organizations can choose to mobilize resources from other sources or other types of resources, sometimes adjusting a part of the organization to the requirements of the environment and continuing other everyday activities as usual (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Civil society organizations are complex and multilayered organizations and not monoliths; their ability to partially adjust to their environments (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2017) is obvious in the case of *Hesed Avraham*, one of the organizations studied by Zhanna Kravchenko (see Chap. 11). Reacting to state pressures, the organization handed over its advocacy activities to other organizations and de-emphasized its original Jewish identity. Beyond that, by using mixes of local and state resources, the organization expanded its

core care activities into several groups outside the narrow Jewish community.

Several of the cases included in this volume illustrate that the abundance of resources and their sources creates spaces of choice for civil society organizations, even if they offer very specific rather than general applicability. The European Solidarity Center in Gdańsk, described in Chap. 1 of this volume, substituted the source of resources by appealing to the general public as the state announced financial cuts. A similar shift is described by Lisa Kings in the case of Save the Children Sweden, which started cooperations with firms as it endeavored to secure long-term and more stable resources (Chap. 8). As Katarzyna Jezierska describes in Chap. 2, some money “stinks,” so to speak, and think tanks use the strategies of diversification and avoidance of specific donors in order to create and maintain an image of independence.

Resources generated by some organizations, such as states, firms, or other civil society organizations, may be borrowed or used by other organizations. For instance, in Sweden, civil society organizations have historically used schools, cafés, and churches as meeting places, reserved sports halls for events, borrowed offices from municipal organizations, and received equipment loans from other organizations. During the last decades, the development of the Internet and associated software programs have also been of paramount importance. The availability of a shared pool of highly generalizable resources, such as Internet technology and social media platforms, allows organizations to use facilities with little effort and thus reduces the costs and the organizational structure necessary for their mobilization and maintenance (see, for example, Johansson and Scaramuzzino, Chap. 12). Freed of such organizational burdens, organizations can appear as less formal and more independent partial organizations (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2011). The sometimes limited convertibility of the resources thus acquired may, however, require the establishment of more formal organizational structures to enable the accumulation of further resources. In her account of the rather informal urban movements emerging in the Polish context, Anna Domaradzka concludes that during the last two decades, there has been a growing interest in digital forms of participation employing different Internet tools, among them participatory budgeting. Furthermore, in comparing

collective action before and after the availability of the Internet, Domaradzka illustrates the point quite clearly:

[W]ebsites, blogs, and social media profiles have become a significant tool for managing the activities of neighborhood groups as well as wider networks of urban activists in Poland. It is through the Internet that residents obtain information, local activists try to mobilize their communities to act, and coordinators announce various types of local activities and events. On the grassroots level, the Internet helps to maintain relations between the involved neighbors and to build a common identity related to a given place. (Chapter 6, p. xx)

When organizations decide whether or not to use particular types of resources, they create new relations with actors and shareholders. This is demonstrated by Vsevolod Bederson and Andrei Semenov in their analysis of choices made by civil society organizations in the Russian context, the requirements associated with the introduction of state funds into civil society, and the strict regulations (“foreign agents” law) associated with them (Chap. 7). According to the authors, Russian civil society organizations seem to understand the tradeoff between loyalty and autonomy. When it comes from the state, funding, as a highly generalizable resource, is accompanied by such strict norms and regulations that its convertibility is reduced, which increases dependency. Thus, organizations that value autonomy minimize contact with the state and tend to rely more on informal participation, while organizations that choose to comply with the requirements of the state engage in extensive interaction with the state and rely on professional staff.

Building on the contributions to this book, I reflect on my earlier research with Göran Ahrne on organizational landscapes (Ahrne & Papakostas, 2014). I suggest approaching civil society as a landscape that is being gradually reshaped, a constellation of various organizations that happen to exist in the same place at the same time, but with different origins, futures, and interdependencies. These constellations are not simple aggregations; rather, they consist of dynamic webs of interrelations, including collaboration and conflict around fundraisingFundraising or the framing of core issues. In this sense, any given constellation will always comprise power relations and hierarchies. Moreover, these

constellations are dynamic, shaping a civil society landscape that is constantly shifting, closing, and opening spaces that a broad variety of organizational forms and missions can inhabit.

This volume captures dynamic constellations of organizations as well as the conditions shaping their existence, such as legal regulations, political opportunity structures, economic circumstances, and normative contexts. From the authors' vantage points, resources are a tool for understanding the topography of civil society landscapes and the shifts in tectonic plates that fundamentally affect the shape of the terrain. Resources not only create the conditions but also provide ways of handling changes that occur in the landscape. Just as with tectonic plates, the changes observable on the surface (of national landscapes) result from pressures and movements that are deeply interconnected beyond the confines of a specific landscape (global and international trends). Although each contribution in this volume is focused on one national context, together they look beyond the traditional nation-state and enhance our understanding of domestic embeddedness and the interrelations between the supranational level and the local context. In sum, the coexisting trends of expanding and closing spaces in civil society development yield an organizational landscape that is becoming increasingly differentiated based on location, group, form, and content. The differentiation is intimately linked to polarization and contradictions between civil society organizations in their different constellations, and it is best revealed through the analysis of resources in which it is embedded.

It is said that good books resemble airport terminals: they offer trips to many destinations. This is a theoretically and empirically rich book with many nuances, and the points of departure I have chosen to highlight in this short epilogue represent only a few of the possibilities.

Notes

1. This work was financed by the Swedish National Research Council, Grant 2014-1557.
2. For more elaborate treatments of relational sociology from an organizational point of view, see Ahrne and Papakostas (2014) and Ahrne (2021).

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