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

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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—*Neusky 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 (Poppo, 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 (Kameråde 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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