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Restrictive Institutions and Critical Resources:

Non-profit Organizations and Volunteer Resources in the Russian Federation

Abstract

Resource management is essential to any organisation's success. For non-profit organisations (NPOs) volunteers are a vital resource. In this paper, we examine how NPOs recruit, mobilise and manage volunteers in a challenging institutional and operational context. By drawing on a qualitative study of Russian health NPOs, our study highlights that the operational and institutional environment encountered by Russian NPOs leads to 'management by network' to acquire necessary volunteer resources. This pragmatic approach ultimately limits the type of volunteer operationalised by Russian NPOs, while at the same time ensures short-term survival. The implications of these findings are also explored.

Keywords:

Restrictive Institutions, Organizational Resources, Nonprofit Organizations, Russian Federation

Introduction

The process of managing organisational resources is a complex, yet critical task. Even though organisational factors determine much of managing resources at the organisational level; institutional factors including, rule-setting societal institutions, and the current operating environment – broader political, social, economic, cultural milieu – also play important roles. Institutional factors not only influence available resources but also the ability of organisations to access them. The broader operating environment will also influence the total quantity of resources available, but also the nature of those resources. Hence organisational level resources are not solely dependent on organisations themselves, but also the institutional and operational context in which they are located (Hall & Soskice, 2001; Hotho & Saka-Helmhout, 2016). NPOs need resources to mobilise, however, deriving their mobilising power as a group of individuals or volunteers coming together with a common grievance or 'generalised belief' (McCarthy and Zald, 1977, p1212). Thus, to achieve their aims and goals the ability of any organization – be they *for*-profit or *non*-profit – to access resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1977; Sherer & Lee, 2002) is shaped by its proficiency in navigating its institutional and operational environments (Marquis & Raynard, 2015) to mobilise resources such as volunteers.

Hotho and Saka-Helmhout (2016) argue that the uniqueness of institutional arrangements means that more insight into different contexts are required to understand how cultural/societal institutions as rule-setters affect organisational practices. In this paper, we add to this tradition of organisation studies by examining non-profit organisations (NPOs) in the Russian Federation. The institutional context for Russian NPOs has two specific characteristics: first, the operating space for NPOs has contracted following the Russian government passing laws restricting freedom of assembly and freedom of expression (Daucé,

2015). These regulatory changes have also limited resources available to Russian NPOs, restricting access to funding from foreign donors, offsetting this with limited state funding made available to some types of NPOs (Salamon, Benevolenski, & Jakobson, 2015). Second, Soviet cultural antecedents in the operating environment have had a restrictive effect on individual's willingness to volunteer or make charitable donations (Kamerade, Crotty, & Ljubownikow, 2016; Kuti, 2004) as well as reinforcing the use of dense personal networks to navigate everyday life as well as institutional and operational challenges (Howard, 2002; Mishler & Rose, 1997; Puffer & McCarthy, 2011; Puffer, McCarthy, & Boisot, 2010). The interventionist nature of the regulatory context designed to license, closely monitor, and limit certain NPO activity (Ljubownikow, Crotty, & Rodgers, 2013; Robertson, 2009) is also likely to affect the way in which NPOs engage with and acquire volunteer resource. Further, low levels of volunteering are also likely to affect the actual pool of volunteers available.

We focus our study on health-related NPOs, as working on issues such as palliative care or children's health is potential 'less controversial' in the current operating NPO environment in the Russian Federation than environmental protection and human rights (Ljubownikow & Crotty, 2016). As such we are more likely to find observable incidences of volunteering and volunteer management in this type of organisation. Arising from the above therefore, this paper has aims to establish how do Russian NPOs acquire volunteer resources within their organisation. Moreover, in what ways does the study of volunteering in this context inform existing theoretical constructs on volunteering?

We find that like their *for*-profit counterparts (see for example Batjargal et al., 2013) Russian NPOs have developed resource management practices the personal networks of organizational leaders, these are used to recruit and retain volunteers and obviate uncertainty created by weak, inefficient, or in this case restrictive societal institutions and an operating environment ambivalent vis-à-vis volunteering. However, unlike their *for*-profit counterparts,

these networks were based on strong personal ties of the organisational leader rather than weaker ties at an organisational level (Batjargal, 2010; Batjargal et al., 2013). The result was that the quality and longevity of their volunteer resource was compromised, creating organisational opportunity costs (i.e. unable to scale up activities and assist more people in need due to their limited organisational reach).

To present our findings in more detail, we structure our paper into four parts. First, we present the literature and theoretical background to our study, detailing the context in which Russian NPOs operate and elaborating on the concept of NPO volunteer management as a proxy for organisational resource management. Second, we outline our qualitative research study of NPOs in two industrialised Russian cities. Third, we illustrate the findings of our study detailing NPOs managerial practices to manage volunteer resources. We conclude by discussing the insights that Russian NPOs provide us about how organisations manage resources in a restrictive resource environment and reflect on the findings vis-à-vis conceptual frameworks on volunteering and the management thereof. In so doing, we highlight how in such context organisations are 'managed by network' to navigate the various restricting societal institutions.

Contextual & Theoretical Background

Volunteering in the Russian Context

At least once a year, on 22nd April, all Soviet citizens were required to 'volunteer' as one of Lenin's subbotnikii – unpaid work to improve the quality and appearance of an individual's immediate environment. Also, it was assumed that everyone would volunteer in his or her (state organised) sports club, (state organised) trade union and (state organised) local community organisation. As a result, these organisations did not need to worry about acquiring, efficiently managing, or retaining volunteers. This cultural legacy of forced participation (Howard, 2002) has however led citizens of the Russian Federation to exercise

their right *not to volunteer* (Belokurova & Vorob'ev, 2011; Mersiyanova, 2010; Mishler & Rose, 1997; Petukhov, 2006, 2008; Smolar, 1996). This lack of enthusiasm for public participation in formal organisations (Petukhov, 2006) has extended to a lack of philanthropy and charitable giving (CAF Russia, 2014) and been compounded by a lack of free time. On average Russians work 1982 hours annually as compared to 1654 hours in the UK, 1790 hours in the US, or the OECD average of 1765 annual hours, although this does not equate to increase worker productivity (OECD, 2014). Also, as the state has withdrawn from many of its prior obligations (Sil & Chen, 2004) – including the welfare state – individuals need to be much more self-reliant in funding health, childcare and education than they were during the Soviet period (Thomson, 2002). Thus, spare time to engage in volunteering activity is limited. Combined, these factors create an operating environment this is at best, ambivalent vis-à-vis volunteering.

Also, Russian NPOs operate in an tightly regulated context, with a clear interventionist regulatory agenda designed at restricting NPO activity[1]. Initial regulatory development has focused on restricting the use of foreign donor funds (Crotty, Hall, & Ljubownikow, 2014; Ljubownikow & Crotty, 2014). However, more recently this interventionist approach has been extended to discussing the introduction of legislation to regulate volunteering, which would require all volunteers to register with a designated state authority (Vorobyov, 2012), or labelling organisations as foreign agents or undesirable (Bennetts, 2012; Daucé, 2015; Luhn, 2015). The state has offset, to a minimal extent, financial resources by organising grant competition and contract for service provision mainly focused at NPOs addressing social issues (Daucé, 2015; Salamon et al., 2015) such as the hNPOs studies in this paper. These funds are administered by competitions however and so require organisations to demonstrate that they can deliver key programs or have the ability to scale their activity (Gromova & Mersiyanova, 2016; On Amending Federal Law 'On Non-

commercial Organisations', 2016). To do so requires the management of volunteer resource. Thus, the threat of volunteering being 'managed' as it was in the Soviet period, identifying, recruiting and retaining of active and legitimate volunteers plays a critical role in the survival of Russian NPOs in their current operating environment, as it can assist in accessing financial support from the state.

Conceptualisations of Volunteering

Within the literature, 'volunteering' is broadly seen as the display of helping behaviours provided without expectation of remuneration (Hustinx, Cnaan, & Handy, 2010) research has thus far paid less attention to considering how volunteers – a critical resource for - NPOs are managed as such (Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy, 2006; DeVoe & Pfeffer, 2007; Hager & Brudney, 2004, 2011). Existing volunteer management literature takes either a universal or a conditional approach to volunteers as a resource (Brudney & Meijs, 2014). The former works on the assumption that volunteers are the same across sectors and contexts and best practices exist upon which NPOs can draw to manage this resource. Conditional approaches highlight that volunteer management is contingent on the sector and the nature of the organisation (Brudney & Meijs, 2014). The insights in our study lend support for conditional approaches to volunteer resource management. Although the conditional approach to volunteer management pays attention to contextual issues, it has not to date considered cultural and institutional environments. It is however cultural and institutional factors that affect the type and amount of volunteer resources available (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). Thus, how such contextual factors shape the management of the volunteer resource requires further attention. This is particularly the case where NPOs are a relatively new phenomenon – such as the Russian Federation. Consequently, this study will illuminate the extent to which the particular institutional arrangements in the Russian Federation help or hinder the

management of NPO resources and what this means for such conceptualisations of volunteering as a result.

Who Volunteers and how are Volunteers Acquired?

To recruit and manage volunteer resources, NPOs require an understanding of why volunteers volunteer. Wilson (2012) suggests that this is influenced by aspects such as social class (middle-class individuals are more likely to volunteer than those from the working class), gender (women are more likely to volunteer than men), level of education (higher educational attainment leading to more volunteering), as well as income, work status, or race. Other aspects such as ones life course, for example retirement (i.e. people in retirement volunteer more often (Wilson, 2012)) and associated experience such as volunteering parents (i.e. individual's whose parents have volunteered are more likely to volunteer themselves (Gage & Thapa, 2012)), also influence the motivation to volunteer.

From an organisational perspective, managing the plethora of potential volunteers adds organisational complexity. However, more generally volunteers can be categorised as either '*spot*' volunteers, that is individuals that volunteer casually and irregularly for an organisation; '*formal*' volunteers, individuals with a more long-term regular commitment to the organisation, often occupying a specific role; or '*forced*' volunteers. These are individuals who are directed to volunteer for an organisation through, for example, corporate volunteering schemes (Grant, 2012; Shin & Kleiner, 2003). Each of these types of volunteer requires NPOs both to recruit and formulate specific approaches to managing this volunteer resource effectively.

Given the many reasons why individuals might volunteer[2], it is essential that NPOs understand the resource pool available and focus their efforts accordingly (Shields, 2009; Ward & McKillop, 2010). According to Hager and Brudney (2011), a specific aspect only found in volunteer resources is the need to understand the roles and skills gaps an NPO has

and then target acquisition approaches accordingly. In the Russian context informal volunteering (i.e. outside organisational setting) has been found to be preferred by individuals (Smith & Mersiyanova, forthcoming) whereas formal volunteering (i.e. as part of an organisation) has been actively rejected (Belokurova & Vorob'ev, 2011; Kamerade et al., 2016; Mersiyanova, 2010; Mishler & Rose, 1997; Petukhov, 2006, 2008; Smolar, 1996). As such it may be more difficult for NPOs to identify volunteers' motive for volunteering, and thus match organisational acquisition strategies. Research on Russian volunteers also outlines that younger individuals are more likely to engage in such behaviour (Krasnopolskaya, Roza, & Meijs, 2016; Smith & Mersiyanova, *forthcoming*). Moreover, Soviet and now Russian life continues to be dominated by social networks (Mishler & Rose, 1997). Organizations themselves might not be helping themselves with acquiring volunteer resource by being parochial and inward-looking (Crotty, 2006; Spencer, 2011). Moreover, widely used within Russian NPOs is the concept of democratic centralism – were the ideas of the leader are automatically adopted by full members consent (Spencer, 2011). This means that how the leader wants to run the organisation and whom they bring into it is entirely within their purview. This might create entry barriers for those who might wish to volunteer. Finally, most Russian NPOs also operate on a small scale (Crotty, 2006, 2009; Spencer, 2011) and so groups may also find it problematic both to identify relevant segments within the broader volunteer resource pool and key activities within their organisation that require volunteer resource. Keeping organizations small and limited to only those people that you know or are reliable also makes sense when operating in a regulatory environment that insists on you registering the aims and goals with the state to ensure that it does not threaten its sovereignty and where the prevailing political environment fails to protect the space for independent NPOs (Daucé, 2015; Robertson, 2009). The use of personal networks has widely been observed in Russian for-profit organisations to obviate inefficient institutions to acquire

resources (Batjargal et al., 2013; Puffer et al., 2010; Ledneva 1998, 2006). Retreating to informal networks and exchange-based relationships may be the best way to navigate this institutional environment to ensure on-going access to resources and organisational survival (Batjargal et al., 2013; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1977; Puffer et al., 2010). Combined, these factors are likely to affect Russian NPOs recruitment and retention capabilities and so again give us the opportunity to reflect on how the practice of acquiring and managing volunteers is shaped by the prevailing institutional context, and its arising implications for existing theory (Hager & Brudney, 2004, 2011; Shields, 2009; Ward & McKillop, 2010).

The most successful way to acquire volunteers is to ask individuals directly (Peterson, 2004). Ward and McKillop (2010), Lee and Brudney (2012) and Bussell and Forbes (2002) all assert that being asked by someone in your existing social network is much more likely to result in you becoming a volunteer than by publicity alone. However to be asked you need to be embedded in a social network (Lee & Brudney, 2012). The bigger and more diverse your social network, the more likely it is that you will engage individual(s) that are already active volunteers. This increases your likelihood of being asked. Also, the type and size of the organisation also determine how easy or difficult it is to acquire volunteer resource. Although smaller organisations might be able to give more personal experiences, they will lack the range of roles within the organisation that might be attractive to a broader range of individuals (Hager & Brudney, 2011). Within the Russian context, some of these aspects are likely to be problematic. Personal networks within the Russian Federation (Ledeneva, 2001, 2006; Mishler & Rose, 1997) are dominated by strong bonding social capital but with insufficient bridging social capital (Putnam, 1995), are likely to limit the number of connections an individual has with the broader community. Unless organisations already have individuals that volunteer in the personal networks of their leaders, the likelihood of asking (i.e. acquiring) a volunteer resource outside these networks is very small. The small scale of many

Russian organisations may also impede their ability to engage in publicity or to identify skills gaps or offer incentives or rewards for volunteering (Peterson, 2004). This study will shed light on the extent to which these factors do limit volunteer recruitment and management and the implications therein.

Methodology

In the current operating environment, the health sector is 'less controversial' than campaigning on human rights (Javeline & Lindemann-Komarova, 2010; Ljubownikow & Crotty, 2016; Mendelson & Gerber, 2007) or environmental protection (Crotty, 2006; Henry, 2010), and so is likely, despite the prevailing ambivalence to present more observable incidences of 'volunteering' by Russian citizens. However, even within the health area, some issues are more likely to be seen favourable (such as for example issue to do with children or the physically disabled) by the public, as well as the state (Benevolenski & Toepler, 2017; Ljubownikow & Crotty, 2016; Skokova, Pape, & Krasnopolskaya, forthcoming). We focus on organisation located in the cities of Perm and Samara. These cities were chosen as sites for this study as they are good examples of industrial, provincial cities located outside of Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The rationale for choosing to explore and analyse volunteering in a provincial location was informed by an understanding that location impacts both the size of the volunteer pool, but also its make-up. In provincial cities, pools will be smaller and less likely to be influenced by international perceptions or propensities for volunteering. As such, studying volunteer engagement in these locations was more likely to be more representative of the experience of the majority of Russian NPOs who operate outside of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Also, with regards to health both Perm and Samara have roughly similar health and wellbeing indicators (Permstat, 2013; Samarastat, 2013). Therefore the two regions are sufficiently alike both to

examine contrasts and similarities between them (Miles & Huberman, 1999) and to minimise potential regional factors to act as explanatory influences.

Studies of organisations and their practices have also increasingly paid more attention to the individual's experience of their organisational, operational and institutional contexts and resultant decision-making processes (Smets, Jarzabkowski, Burke, & Spee, 2014; Smets, Morris, & Greenwood, 2012; Tilcsik, 2010). In such contexts, a qualitative approach – which can tease out individual motivation and nuance concerning the line of enquiry is, therefore, more appropriate. Adopting an inductive research design also enabled us to capture the respondent's own interpretations (Eisenhardt, 1989) and experiences of managing the volunteer resource, assisting us in evaluating how respondents understand the institutional environment of their organizations – in Russia the regulative context and low levels of volunteering – which in turn shapes organizational characteristics and behaviours vis-à-vis volunteers.

As both individual perceptions, as well as organisational practices, are essential to understanding how hNPOs engage with volunteers, we operationalised an ethnographic approach collecting data via a combination of observations, which included informal conversations with hNPO members/staff and clients, as well as semi-structured interviews with organisational decision makers. One researcher (male, Russian speaker) conducted the observations spending on average one working week with each organisation observing daily routines, activities, and events organised by hNPOs. This data was recorded in an extensive research diary daily, which was vital in providing contextual insight during the analysis process. To capture any bias in the observations researcher two (female, Russian speaker) also joined some of the observational activities. When both researchers were present, each made separate observational notes and research diary entries. Following the observations, the researchers then compared their insights and discussed any discrepancies.

As noted above, Russian NPOs are often dominated by the widespread use of democratic centralism where the leader's vision and ideas are adopted in full by staff or member consent (Spencer, 2011). As such, interviews were conducted with NPO leaders and/or key personnel with decision-making authority. Further, all but one of the leaders of Russian hNPOs in this study were also the founders of the organisations and thus 'thoroughly acculturated' in their organisations and its wider context (Spradley, 1979, p. 46).

Each respondent was interviewed twice, informed by literature on resource mobilisation of organizational resources and institutional context and pressures (Åberg, 2015; Barney, 1991; Bekkers, 2005; Chambré, 1997; Desa, 2012; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Sherer & Lee, 2002), the volunteering literature (Brudney & Meijs, 2009; Handy et al., 2010; Hustinx et al., 2010; Shin & Kleiner, 2003; Wilson, 2012), the literature on Russian civil society developments (Crotty, 2009; Fröhlich, 2012; Henry, 2006, 2010; Jakobson & Sanovich, 2010; Sundstrom, 2005; Thomson, 2006), and commentary on volunteering in the Russian Federation and the impact of Soviet cultural antecedents (Howard, 2002; Mishler & Rose, 1997; Petukhov, 2006, 2008; Smolar, 1996). The second interview was complemented with questions arising from the observations conducted. Both interviews were conducted in Russian lasting on average one hour each.

Interview data, observational data, organisational documentation (when supplied by organisations or publicly available) were used to validate each other as part of the triangulation process during analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1999; Stake, 1995). The focus of the data collection process was to establish the *modus operandi* of hNPOs and the role volunteer resources and the organisation's management of said resource. The data collection process included reflective periods to adjust and amend the interview protocol to capture and probe any arising issues as well as reflection and discussion of the observational data and research diaries between the researcher team.

To recruit organisations, hNPOs were initially identified using web-based resources (http://www.nko-ural.ru/) as well as through the assistance provided by partner Universities in Perm and Samara. Participating hNPOs were purposefully selected (O'Reilly, Paper, & Marx, 2012; Siggelkow, 2007) based on their activities and objectives and whether or not they understand themselves as *obshchestvennyye organizatsii* (i.e. social or societal organisations – a general term both the Russian state and NPOs themselves use to characterise Russian NPOs). This process recruited seven organisations in Perm and five organisations in Samara. Amongst the total of 12 organisations, four organisations in each region reflected a matched pair that is organisations whose activities engaged with the same constituency/service user group. These four pairs were in drug abuse/prevention and HIV/AIDS, disability, palliative care, and children living with cancer (see Appendix A for an overview of all organisations participating in this study).

For analytical purposes, all interviews were transcribed and translated into English using a professional translation and transcription service. The transcripts were then reviewed for accuracy by the researchers before coding. Research one had been present for approximately 80% of the interviews conducted while researcher two for only approximately 20% and so to remove bias or presumptions about what was important in the data (Spradley, 1979), researcher two first engaged in open coding. From this, three broad themes emerged; a) engagement with constituencies b) limits on volunteer and barriers to success c) organisational leadership, skills needs/gaps and training. Following this, researcher two engaged in another round of axial coding, relating the themes and concepts to one another (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2007). This was done by switching between analysing the data and returning to the literature on organisational resources and volunteering to ground emerging concepts and to identify possible contributions. In so doing the data was distilled into clusters; NPO-volunteer engagement such as types of available volunteer resource, acquisition of

volunteer resource, retention of volunteers, or utilisation of the volunteer resource. Once this stage had been completed, researcher one reviewed the coding to add additional insights. The discussion that follows explores these aspects using a narrative inspired approach by operationalising "illuminating examples" (de Vaus, 2001, p. 240) from the interviews to exemplify key points.

In presenting this data we adopt a numbered code for the respondents, prefix 1 for Samara and prefix 2 for Perm, with each hNPO then numbered 1-7 and then a or b for the first or second interview and so on, to ensure the anonymity of the respondents.

Findings

Types of Volunteer

Despite the negative outlook provided by past studies on volunteering rates and cultural biases against volunteering in the Russian context (Crotty, 2006; Howard, 2002), our data highlights that hNPOs were able to engage volunteers. Moreover, hNPOs were able to engage with spot, formal, and forced volunteers (Shin & Kleiner, 2003) indicating that context did not affect the *type* of volunteer resources in the Russian volunteer pool. In some respects, the demographic make-up of these volunteers also reflected the literature. Gender, specifically female, for example, was an essential factor in volunteer resources with hNPOs stating that 'the volunteers are mostly girls' (2.3a) or 'most of them are girls' (2.2a), (Hodgkinson, 2003; Musick & Wilson, 2008). Also similar however to volunteer resource in other contexts (Wilson, 2012), Russian hNPOs were also able to draw on former service users or their immediate families. However, students at College and University level also dominated the volunteer resources of hNPOs. This deviates from the literature from developed democracies that indicate that older/retirees are more likely to volunteer (Musick & Wilson, 2008; Wilson, 2012).

Both students and former service users and their families were perceived by hNPOs to have different motives for volunteering. HNPOs portrayed students as motivated by the need to gain experience for 'their future profession' (2.3a) or for their 'college application' (2.4a), thus conforming more to the 'forced' volunteer descriptor. Conversely, former service users wanted to show gratitude for what the organisation has done (1.3; 1.5; 2.1; 2.4; 2.5) for 'drug users' (2.5a, 2.5b), 'former patients' (1.3b), or 'deceased patients' (2.6a). However, hNPOs reported difficulties with using the latter type of volunteers long-term. Such volunteers could 'burn out' (1.3b) or 'return to using again' (2.5a). Similarly, students wanting to obtain work experience or similar were unlikely to commit to volunteering beyond the acquisition of their experience. Both, therefore, reflected the 'spot' volunteer descriptor. The 'spot' nature of these volunteers was acknowledged by the respondents describing them as 'one-off' (1.4a), occurring 'just once' (1.1a), was 'one time' (1.4b), 'temporary' (2.5a), or at most '2-3 times' (2.4a). Consequently, hNPOs engage these 'spot' volunteers in non-core activity such as 'painting and gardening' (1.1a), 'house visits' (1.3a), 'New Year's holiday event' (1.2a), 'transport assistance' (2.2a), 'making phone calls' (2.6a), and 'website maintenance' (2.7a). Only occasionally did hNPOs draw on any professional skills of their spot volunteer such as legal knowledge to support the organisations regulatory compliance (1.3b; 2.4d, 2.5a). HNPOs also attracted spot volunteers to work on 'specific projects' (1.4a, b) but once the project was over, our observations showed organisations made no attempts to retain volunteers or re-engage these volunteers in subsequent projects. There was also large variability to the number of *spot* volunteers (Shin and Kleiner, 2003) attracted by different organisations during a calendar year with some using 100 (1.1a), 50 (2.4d) or 30 (1.3a) and others fewer than ten (1.2a; 2.1a) volunteers.

Three organisations in this study described their volunteers as *forced* volunteers who worked at their organisations as part of an 'internships' (2.4d) or required work experience for

their studies (1.3b, 2.4d). Such volunteering was their only way to gain relevant experience for employment after completing their education. Moreover, a proportion of the *spot* volunteers for hNPOs were described by respondents as *to-order* volunteers. These were volunteers that hNPO leaders recruited for specific events because of their relationships with other organisational leaders. Predominantly these came from the 'young guard' (*molodaya gvardiya*, 1.1a), an organisation founded by the ruling United Russia party in 2005 to promote volunteering amongst young people. In these cases, it was not the student's choice to volunteer 'so those young people who end up helping us, do so not because of their decision to help, but because they were asked to, or even ordered to' (1.1a). Such volunteers were often used to help with transportation or other event supporting tasks such as distributing leaflets (observations made at events organised by 1.1; 2.2; 2.4; 2.4). As such these *to-order* or *forced* volunteers had no direct link or relationship with the organisation or their area of activity and so were unlikely to volunteer again – however still required managerial resources during their time with the organisation.

Eight organizations (1.1; 1.4; 1.5; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6) in total stated that they had longer-term or *formal* volunteers. These relationships were often denoted by a 'volunteer contract' (1.1a) or 'volunteer agreement' (2.3a) stating explicitly what the volunteer was prepared to do for the organisation. HNPOs highlighted they perceived that formal volunteers (Clary et al., 1996) often used volunteering as a way of 'self-realisation' (2.4d), pursing 'personal interests' (2.5a) and thus had a 'willingness' (2.6a) to commit long term. This also enabled hNPOs to assign formal volunteers with specific roles (1.4a; 2.4a) that occurred at regular intervals. However, the number of formal volunteers was significantly less than spot volunteers, ranging from 28 (1.1a) to 12 (2.4a) and as few as 6 (1.3a). HNPOs considered formal volunteers as more professional and thus tasked them with activities and

responsibilities directly related to the organisations core activities such as 'children's therapy' (1.4a) 'computer education of the disabled' (1.1a) or 'working with children' (2.2a).

The narratives of hNPOs around types of volunteer resources reflect their ability to engage with different volunteers despite the cultural norm of state-enforced volunteering in the Soviet Union. Interestingly, despite the choice now *not* to volunteer (Kuti, 2004) the volunteers hNPO could draw upon reflects the extant literature in this area (Shin & Kleiner, 2003). Spot, forced and formal volunteers were available in the Russian context the same as in a developed democracy context. This illustrates that the Russian operating environment was not as ambivalent to volunteer as it might first appear. It was not a factor in the type of volunteer resource available to NPOs. However, the demographic makeup of the volunteer pool did deviate from that highlighted in the literature (Wilson, 2012). Different life course considerations skewed the volunteer pool towards the young rather than the retired (Musick & Wilson, 2008; Wilson, 2012). Male life expectancy below retirement age (Cockerham, 2012) and inadequate pension provision for seniors (Cook, 2007) are contributing factors in limiting the pool of older volunteers available to hNPOs. Moreover, although the operating environment did not seem to affect the types of volunteer resources available to hNPO, respondent cited that the overall size of the volunteer resource pool was insufficient. Our evidence highlights that the size of the pool was limited, at least in part, by hNPO approaches to managing volunteer resources. It is to the exploration of these factors that we now turn.

Volunteer acquisition

Views differed across the organisations in this study with regards to the acquisition of volunteer resources. These ranged from a perception that 'we are never short of volunteers' (1.1a) to ' it is hard to recruit volunteers…we do not know where to find them' (2.7a). However, all organisations linked the ability to acquire volunteers and the level, range, and scope of activities they could undertake. Despite this recognition, not all organisations

actively sought out volunteers. Some hNPOs did not proactively engage in volunteer resource acquisition at all stating that they relied on individuals approaching them, as the following discourse illustrates

> We do not find volunteers; they come to us with the desire to help (1.5a)

> They come here…if someone has an interest in working with us, we support them (2.1a)

> We receive phone calls from people willing to help…our base of volunteers comes from…the relatives of deceased patients (2.6a)

This discourse reflects a perceived willingness of individuals to volunteer, yet hNPOs appeared unwilling or unable to (pro)actively seek them out. Although organisations directed volunteer recruitment activities at the broader public by using their 'website' (1.1a; 2.7a), most of the volunteer resources were acquired via a parochial approach.

Volunteer resource acquisition was reliant on NPO leaders who used their '[personal] social networks' (2.2a), connections with 'youth leaders' (1.2a), contacts with the 'psychology department at the University' (1.4b), 'teachers' (2.2a) or a 'small book [in the literal sense of a small notebook] of good people' (2.2a). This was particularly the case when resources were required for non-core activities such as transport assistance, help with renovating, or assistance with one-off events. Leaders used their contacts and social networks to either ask individuals that they knew and trusted to assist with organisational activities – sometimes for the individuals help directly, sometimes for the individual's ability to supply volunteer resources.

In only operationalising and utilising their social networks to acquire and activate volunteers, organisational leaders of hNPOs were only able to draw on a limited resource pool. There was no evidence in this study that *asking* people to volunteer went beyond the organisational leader asking their immediate and trusted contacts. Other organisational members or volunteers within the organisations studied did not 'ask' on the hNPOs behalf. Organizations also failed to take opportunities to acquire volunteer resources from a broader base indicating that they lacked the requisite skills to do so. For example, at an awareness event at a University in Samara, the leader and members of group 1.1 failed to explain the students who attended how they could get involved with the organisation in case of interest. Only organisations 1.4 and 2.2 used publicity from 'job fairs' (1.4a) or campaigning events to recruit volunteers.

> After big events we have a wave of both volunteers and benefactors…the more activities we do the more volunteers we get (2.2a).

Thus, most hNPOs in our study relied primarily on the personal networks of their organisational leaders for the acquisition of volunteer resources. It is of no surprise then that hNPOs did not operate any formalised process of volunteer resource management (including acquisition) relying heavily on a small pool of permanent and trusted volunteers as well as forced volunteers acquired from trusted contacts. Dovetailing with this, however, is a perception that volunteer resource outside the immediate pool could not be acquired. There was no discussion of detailed publicity plans, or incentives or rewards for volunteers (Peterson, 2004). Instead, narratives centred on the lack of time – an issue outside the organisations control. Respondents' only comment on the wider pool of volunteer resource was that people's 'busy lives' (2.2a), 'no time' (1.3b, 1.4b), and 'they do not have spare time

to come here (1.2b)' impeded the acquisition of more volunteers. As noted above, Russians do have less free time than their European counterparts; however hNPO leaders also repeated their belief in the widespread ambivalence towards volunteering in the operating environment, stating that most people did not see the 'benefits' (2.7a) of volunteering in modern Russia. However, in using the 'no time' narrative, organisations focused on an issue outside of their control and hence failed to consider what they could do to develop their volunteer resource acquisition capability.

Most hNPOs in this study were content, if not keen to keep the volunteer pool closed or at least under their control. Some of this could be explained by the democratic centralism that dominates Russian NPOs (Spencer, 2011). However, parochial volunteer recruitment practices, using personal networks, also cemented the leader's internal power base, and thus status within their organisation (Hager & Brudney, 2011). This may assist them in securing volunteer resources in the short-term. Over-reliance on the network of the leader is likely impeding organisational sustainability, its lifespan, keeping them on a small scale, creating issues with succession planning and so on. The issues of volunteer resource acquisitions highlighted were further compounded by organisations taking an *ad hoc* approach to volunteer retention.

Volunteer training & retention

Across hNPOs in this study, half reported that they engaged in some volunteer training. Most hNPOs took an *ad hoc* rather than a scheduled approach to training volunteers because they did 'not have the resources for the constant training of volunteers' (1.3a), although they did suggest that they would like to do more in this regards. In some cases, volunteers conducted training themselves. At organisation 1.3 for example, a volunteer psychologists gave 'lectures to volunteers before they go to the patients' (1.3b). Others developed training programs, with one organisation having prepared a 'training brochure'

(2.2a) while another had monthly training sessions where volunteers 'exchange experiences and share problems we encounter and ways to solve them' (2.4d). Conversely, others did not have the skills or capacity to train volunteers in-house and so 'sent them for training somewhere…to various women's movements…and conferences across Russia' (2.1a), 'to Moscow to get special training' (1.3b) or asked other non-profit organisations with the requisite skills to 'educate and prepare volunteers specifically for our needs' (1.3b). Such collaboration also relied on the leader's personal contacts and networks. It was personal relations, rather than institutionalised organisational practices which facilitated co-operation between organisations, and thus the ability to train volunteers if need be.

Volunteer training was focused on either fundamental skills, or specific tasks relevant to supporting the core activities of the organisation such as fundraising, engaging with patients, or working with children were training was viewed as 'extremely important [as] it is dangerous to let just anyone work with kids' (2.2a). However, hNPOs highlighted that they considered training to take part in 'club or mass events…to hand out promotional materials' (1.5a) was not necessary. In hNPOs where training took place, it was viewed as important to retain volunteers and to be able as an organisation to undertake essential tasks. Not needing to train volunteers also links to how some volunteer resources access (acquired). As illustrated above, for activities requiring many volunteer resources hNPOs operationalised the personal relationships of leader. In this context, training could remain minimal as such volunteers were seen as 'boots on the ground' (1.1b). Also retaining these volunteers was less of a priority as it was the personal relationship of the leader that was able to mobilise these resources and thus no institutionalise organisational practices required to manage this type of volunteer resources. If needed the future, the leader could use their networks again. As such, respondents also alluded to that fact that their relations with the individuals in their 'book of good people' (1.2b) were what ensured volunteer retention.

Thus, while the institutional and operating environments appear to have no impact on the *type* of volunteer in the pool, it does appear to influence the way in which hNPOs go about recruiting and retaining them. The negative institutional multiplicity of interventionist regulation, unsupportive political environment, and adverse socio-cultural legacies have left hNPOs relied on the leader's network to recruit, train, and retain volunteer resources rather than having developed organisational practices that enabled them to draw volunteers from the broader population. This ultimately limited the volunteer resources available to the organisation. We explore the implications of these findings in more detail in the concluding section below.

Conclusion

Our study contributes to growing literature highlighting the importance of institutional and operating environment on organisations and management practices within (Bamberger & Pratt, 2010; Foss, Husted, & Michailova, 2010; Michailova & Hutchings, 2006; Puffer & McCarthy, 2011). To date this literature has mainly focused on *for*-profit organizations (Michailova, McCarthy, Puffer, May, & Stewart, 2013; Puffer & McCarthy, 2011), however with this paper we demonstrate that such insights are also applicable to organizations in other areas, specifically *non*-profits even though such organizations are often portrayed as being very different in their makeup and the way they operate (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). To examine these issues, we studied hNPOs in Russia and have addressed the research question of how do Russian NPOs acquire volunteer resources?

Despite the Soviet Union socio-cultural legacies, our data demonstrate that hNPO were able to acquire relevant volunteer resources when they were needed. However, organisations did not proactively seek out volunteers or 'ask' (Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Lee & Brudney, 2012) individuals to volunteer to build a broad base of potential volunteer resources, but instead relied on personal relations of their leaders. NPOs seem to be content with their

existing resource pool although acknowledging that it was sometimes limiting any scaling up of activities. We attribute this to the specific institutional context in which NPOs operate which is dominated by both interventionist regulatory institutions and political institutions unwilling to protect the operating space for NPOs (Richter & Hatch, 2013). In a context where NPOs operation space is restricted, and they might be subject to 'suspended punishment' (Ledeneva, 2006) if not adhering to formal and informal norms, acquiring volunteer resources from trusted channels helps organisations to insulate themselves. It ensured that organisations were in full control of their activities and associated resources and so less dependent on finding volunteer resource from a general public has limited awareness of NPOs (Levada Center, 2013). Furthermore, keeping their volunteer pool limited also enabled NPOs to mitigate some of the managerial resource burdens that volunteer resources bring.

Batjargal et al., (2013) asserts that inefficient or restrictive institutions create resource uncertainty, which also applies to the hNPOs in this study. To mitigate this uncertainty NPOs in the Russian Federation deploy network-based approaches to acquire resources. With accessing volunteer resources available to them via other organisation using personal networks, NPOs can maintain organisational flexibility facilitating their ability to adapt to an ever-changing regulatory context (Skokova, 2017). Further, the acquisition of volunteer resources and the volunteer training arrangements demonstrate increased collaboration in a sector often characterised as fragmented. Other than Russian *for*-profit organisations which build a safety net of networks to acquire resources using weak ties (Batjargal, 2010; Batjargal et al., 2013), hNPOs instead relied on the personal networks of their organisational leader. This approach may afford the organisation flexibility and access to resources – in this case, volunteers – in the short term, but in the long term it reinforces the parochial nature of Russian NPOs and limits the ability to develop relevant resource acquisition capability

independent of the leader. This contributes to keeping NPOs on a small scale and eventually is likely to create problems such as succession planning and organisational longevity.

The conclusions that are drawn here also need to be seen in the light of the limitations of this study. A larger sample, a different methodological approach, different areas of NPO activity and different regions may have provided other insights into volunteer engagement. Thus additional research is also needed to examine different regions which are more heterogeneous with the former Soviet Union (including those outside of the Russian Federation) regarding their ethnic or religious makeup as well as focusing on other sectors, which are potentially more political contentious such as human or LGBT rights. Future research will also need to examine how negative institutional multiplicity affects aspects of organisational activities other than volunteer resource acquisition.

Nevertheless, our paper provides an understanding how Russian NPOs engage with a critical organisational resource (i.e. volunteers) and the difficulties they face in doing so. We highlight that like many other key resources of Russian NPOs; it is the leader's personal networks and connections that are crucial to such organisation being able to access and mobilise such resources, (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Our paper also highlights that restrictive institutions such as encountered by Russian NPOs can lead organisations to respond by operationalising 'management by network' to acquire necessary resources. Though our results might suggest that NPOs have limited resources, it also demonstrates a pragmatic nature of dealing with Russia's institutional framework and thus is indicative of some promising roots for the future development of civil society more broadly.

Appendices

Appendix A: Overview over Participating Organizations

Table A.1: Organizations in Samara (Region 1)

Code	Interviewee(s)	Organizational Objectives
Organization 1.1: Interview 1a Interview 1b	Director/Founder	- protect the rights of the disabled - promote equality of the disabled to participate in all aspects of life - promote the integration of the disabled into society
Organization 1.2: Interview 2a Interview 2b	Managing Director	- assist children and their families in difficult life situations
Organization 1.3: Interview 3a Interview 3b	Managing Director	- medical, social, psychological and spiritual help for people with terminal cancer and their families
Organization 1.4: Interview 4a Interview 4b	Director/Founder	- protect rights and interest of children living with cancer - promote charitable giving to raise money to help with care for children living with cancer
Organization 1.5: Interview 5a Interview 5b	Director/Founder	- promoting the prevention of HIV infection amongst the youth - promoting of faithfulness and safe sex

Table A.2: Organizations in Perm (Region 2)

Organization 2.1: Interview 1a Interview 1b	Managing Director	- supporting people with drug addictions - acting as a resource center for other drug focused organizations
Organization 2.2: Interview 2a	Managing Director	- supporting children living with cancer and their families
Organization 2.3: Interview 3a Interview 3b	Director/Founder	- assist children and their families in difficult life situations
Organization 2.4: Interview 4a Interview 4b Interview 4c Interview 4d	Managing Director Deputy Director/Founder	- help at-risk children and teenagers - empower vulnerable children and teenagers to live a healthy, independent lifestyle, by providing psychological, medical, material and legal support.
Organization 2.5: Interview 5a Interview 5b	Director/Founder Chief Operating Officer	- provision of charitable help for socially challenged citizens, involving drug and alcohol users, HIV/AIDS - building of scientific foundation and promotion of united antidrug policy among specialist of government and non-government groups; - initiation, development, and realization of antidrug projects and programs, and HIV/AIDS prophylaxis programs
Organization 2.6: Interview 6a	Director/Founder	- medical, social, psychological and spiritual help for people with terminal cancer and their families
Organization 2.7: Interview 7a Interview 7b	Managing Director	- protect the rights of the disabled - promote equality of the disabled to participate in all aspects of life - promote the integration of the disabled into society

Endnotes

[1]Following the role played by internationally funded nongovernmental organizations in the so-called 'Colour Revolutions' –exit polls conducted by such organizations indicated that presidential elections had been rigged – the Russian Federation openly rejected overseas democracy assistance and thus sought to curtail its influence. Critical to this aim was the curbing of the activity and scope of nongovernmental organisations including NPOs through restricting or outlawing the use of overseas funds (Maxwell, 2006).

[2] Wilson (2012) suggests the reasons for individuals to volunteer is influenced by social class, gender, level of education, income, work status, race and other aspects such as life course considerations, for example retirement. Moreover, associated experience such as volunteering parents (Gage & Thapa, 2012), also influence the motivation to volunteer.

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