9

Humane Resources? The People Behind Polish Civil Society Organizations

Galia Chimiak

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

G. Chimiak (✉)
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland
e-mail: gchimiak@ifispan.edu.pl

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

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

Overview of Earlier Research

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

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

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

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

From the overview above, individuals in different organizational roles, with their distinct motivations and modes of engagement, are to be understood as a particularly dynamic resource, which renders analyses of change over time of central importance. This chapter contributes to the existing literature by discussing the evolution of human resources in Polish civil society over the past 40 years. Rather than regarding human resources as a static phenomenon, it focuses on the change processes that go beyond a mere description of activists, members, volunteers, employees, etc. as proponents of particular ideas or defenders of certain vulnerable groups and treats them as organizational assets. To document the evolving nature of civic activism, selected outcomes from the research conducted among aid professionals[1] are presented (Chimiak, 2016) and discussed in the context of other relevant studies, including the most recent analyses of developments referring specifically to human resources in civil society in Poland.

Dynamics of Changes in Polish Civil Society

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Foreign Aid and the Individualization of Polish Civil Society

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

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

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

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

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

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

Polish Aid and Donor-Induced Changes in Norms and Practices

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The dominance of institutionalized civil society activism has furthermore been challenged by the precarization of work. This process has been especially palpable in creative industries such as journalism, academia, and civil society organizations. In the case of civil society, the precariat and the projectariat[3] are known to be commonplace. Another threat comes from the finding that Poles with higher educational levels and in precarious jobs tend to become *less* engaged in public matters due to their job instability (Kiersztyn, 2017). This tendency suggests that, should current trends in the labor market persist, precarity may eventually turn out to be a greater threat to human resources than the infamous post-socialist reticence about civic engagement (ibid., p. 224).

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

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

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

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

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

Regional Findings, Global Implications

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

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

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

In Poland, the consequences of these global developments were reinforced by the coming to power of a political party which—unlike predecessors who had allegedly been "at the very least uninvolved" (Gliński, 2006, p. 32) in supporting the then fledgling civil society—devised a decidedly pro-active or interventionist policy toward it. This policy, implemented by the National Freedom Institute—Centre for the Development of Civil Society, established in 2017, has been contested by some organizations[4] and welcomed by others, especially those that have previously felt themselves omitted in the distribution of public funds.

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

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

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

Notes

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

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

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