



VOLUNTEERING AND HELPING IN SERBIA: MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

Volontiranje i pomaganje u Srbiji: osnovne odlike

ABSTRACT: *Volunteering is conceptualised as an activity when time is given freely to benefit another person, group or cause. Such activity can be done through formal organisations and informal groups, but time can also be given directly to people in need. However, volunteering to formal organisations tend to predominate in the research, and our knowledge on the factors that promote such behaviour mostly comes from countries where this form of giving time is well developed, particularly from Anglo-Saxon and Western and Northern European countries. Focussing on three forms of giving time in Serbia: volunteering to formal organisations, volunteering in informal groups and helping individuals, this paper seeks to address these gaps in the literature. Data analysed in this paper come from the first encompassing national survey on pro-social behaviour (N= 1,528) carried out in Serbia in 2014. This research shows that providing direct help to people (71.2%) is by far a more common activity than volunteering to formal organisations (27.7%) and participating in the activities of informal groups (22.8%). There are differences in giving time according to socio-demographic characteristics. In general, respondents who reported giving time are likely to be found among the younger population, among students and those without health problems. Also, different socio-demographic groups of population engage in different forms of giving time.*

KEY WORDS: volunteering, formal and informal volunteering, helping, volunteers, Serbia.

APSTRAKT: *Volontiranje se definiše kao aktivnost kada se dobrovoljno posvećuje vreme za dobrobit druge osobe ili grupe, ili kako bi se podržao određeni cilj. Ove aktivnosti se mogu obavljati u okviru organizacija i neformalnih grupa, ali se vreme može posvetiti i neposredno osobama kojima je podrška potrebna. Međutim, istraživanje ovog fenomena fokusirano je na volontiranje u formalnim organizacijama, a naše znanje o faktorima koji pospešuju takvo ponašanje uglavnom dolazi iz istraživanja sprovedenih u zemljama gde su ove prakse zastupljene, posebno iz anglo-saksonske područja. Predmet ovog rada su tri forme*

davanja vremena: volontiranje u okviru organizacija, učešće u aktivnostima za dobrobit zajednice u okviru neformalnih grupa i pružanje neposredne pomoći pojedincima. Analizirajući empirijske podatke iz originalnog istraživanja sprovedenog na reprezentativnom uzorku (N=1528) u Srbiji 2014. godine, ovaj rad daje doprinos literaturi. Istraživanje pokazuje da je pružanje direktne pomoći (71,2%) daleko zastupljenija aktivnost od volontiranja u organizacijama (27,2%) i neformalnim grupama (22,8%). Postoje razlike u davanju vremena između različitih socio-demografskih grupa. Generalno gledano, ispitanici koji su naveli da su posvetili svoje vremen za dobrobit drugih ili za postizanje zajedničkog dobra nalaze se uglavnom među mlađom populacijom, među studentima i onima bez zdravstvenih problema. Međutim, različite socio-demografske grupe stanovništva se uključuju u različite oblike davanja vremena.

KLJUČNE REČI: volontiranje, formalno i neformalno volontiranje, pomaganje, volonteri, Srbija.

1. Introduction

All over the world and through the recorded history people have voluntarily dedicated their time, labour and energy to benefit another person, group or a cause (Butcher and Einolf 2017, Hustinx, Cnann and Handy 2010, Smith, Stebbins and Grotz 2016). Cooperation and helping others, even complete strangers, seems to be the characteristics of our species (Bowles and Gintis 2011, Green 2013, Hodgson 2013, Richerson and Boyd 2005).

Although disposition to help others is universal, the way time, labour and energy intended to benefit another person, group or a cause, are channelled is not uniform. In some countries, there are high rates of giving time to formal organisations, while in others, such practices are not developed, but people help each other directly (Butcher and Einolf 2017, Smith et al. 2016). Notwithstanding, volunteering time to organisations tend to predominate in the research and our knowledge on the factors that promote such behaviour mostly comes from countries where this form of giving time is well developed, particularly from Anglo-Saxon and Western and Northern European countries (Musick and Wilson 2008, Rochester, Ellis and Howlett 2010, Wilson 2012).

Research on volunteering in the former socialist countries of South-Eastern Europe is scarce. For example, in the collection of essays titled *Perspectives on Volunteering Voices from the South* (eds. Butcher and Einolf 2017) which examines volunteering in developing and transitional countries, none of the Eastern European countries is present. There is no encompassing research on volunteering in Serbia. Focusing on giving time to formal organisations, informal groups and directly to people in Serbia, this paper seeks to address these gaps in the literature.

Conceptualisation of volunteering and challenges of measuring it are elaborated in the second section of this paper. Third section presents theoretical explanations and empirical evidence of the relation between socio-demographic

characteristics of individuals and their propensity to give time. Empirical evidence from Serbia is provided in the fourth section. Data on volunteering and helping analysed in this paper are original data from the national survey on pro-social behaviour conducted in Serbia in 2014.

2. Conceptualisation and Measurement

2.1. *What is Volunteering?*

Scholars from various disciplines, ranging from economics and sociology to psychology and political sciences, have strived to conceptualise and explain volunteering, but there is little consensus over the definition of this phenomenon. In their review of over 200 definitions of volunteering, Cnaan and Amroffell (1994) and Cnaan, Handy, and Wadsworth (1996) found out that volunteering is perceived as an activity when time, labour and expertise are given freely to benefit another person, group or cause. These activities can be done through formal organisations and informal groups, but time can also be given directly. However, under the term volunteering, scholars usually count only formal and public activities which benefit strangers (Hustinx, Cnaan and Handy 2010, Musick and Wilson 2008, Wilson 2012). Volunteering as defined is distinguished from providing direct help to people or addressing problems in an ad hoc and informal way (Musick and Wilson 2008).

While formal, institutionalised volunteering is more common in the developed world, informal, direct help is universal (Butcher and Einolf 2017). Thus, the perspective of volunteering as public and formal that benefit strangers is rather narrow and holds a “Northern bias” (ibid:V). Such a view leads to the inaccurate conclusion that there is very little volunteering taking place in many countries. In order to overcome this bias, certain definitions of volunteering include helping people directly and addressing communal problems in informal groups, as well as supporting the organisations of which the volunteer is a member.

The United Nations Volunteers – UNV (1999) definition of volunteering states: “There are three key defining characteristics of volunteering. First, the activity should not be undertaken primarily for financial reward, although the reimbursement of expenses and some token payment may be allowed. Second, the activity should be undertaken voluntarily, according to the individual’s own free will, although there are grey areas here too, such as school community service schemes which encourage and sometime require, students to get involved in voluntary work and Food for Work programmes, where there is an explicit exchange between community involvement and assistance. Third, the activity should be of benefit to someone other than the volunteer, or to society at large, although it is recognized that volunteering brings significant benefit to the volunteer as well.”

The International Labour Organization – ILO (2011) defines volunteering as: “unpaid non-compulsory work: that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organization or directly for others outside their own household” (ILO: 13).

Authors who count giving time directly to people as volunteering, usually distinguish between formal and informal volunteering, where formal volunteering is managed and coordinated through formal organisations and informal is carried out through loosely organised groups, often spontaneously gathered to address certain problem, or through initiatives of individuals (Leigh et al. 2011).

To avoid these terminological ambiguities, I will use the term *formal volunteering* to refer to people giving their time to organisations, *informal volunteering* or *participating in informal groups* to refer to the activities of giving one's time to assist an informal group, while the terms *helping (people directly)*, *providing assistance* and *taking care* will be reserved to define the giving of one's time to individuals in need. All three forms will be called *individual giving of time*.

2.2. Methodological Challenges in Measuring Giving Time

Formal volunteering is the most researched form of giving time among the three. It is usually measured through population surveys on relatively small samples, covering a long reference periods, usually one year, and assuming that respondents have the same conceptualisations of volunteering. This leads to a number of difficulties. Among the most important problems are: 1) *ambiguity about what activities are captured by a survey* due to different interpretations of the term volunteering; 2) *nonresponse bias* – those who refuse to take part in surveys are probably those who do not volunteer, which may lead to exaggeration in a rate of volunteering; 3) *recall bias* – since volunteering is done sporadically it is difficult to be recalled); 4) *social desirability bias* – since helping others is a socially desirable behaviour, survey respondents often exaggerate in reporting such behaviour (Salamon et. al. 2017). Consequently, different surveys performed in a same country rarely yield similar estimates of the rates of volunteering (ibid.).

How volunteering is defined influences what we count as volunteering and how we measure it (Rochestwer et al. 2010). An example of how different framing of the questions on volunteering yields different estimates of the share of population which volunteers is given by Rochester and colleagues (2010): “If a survey asks something along the lines of ‘do you volunteer’, in the United Kingdom, very broadly speaking, we tend to find that approximately 20 per cent of the population will say ‘yes’, as in the Northern Ireland survey by the Volunteer Development Agency discussed below. However, if we ask about participation in a range of organisations, and then about helping those organisations through a range of activities, which we have defined as volunteering but which respondents might not themselves recognise as such, then we find approximately 40 per cent of people volunteer.” (ibid: 39).

2.3. Different Forms of Giving Time

It has been argued that giving time is “a characteristic of our species”, and that helping could be traced back to our origins (Smith and Van Puyvelde 2016). Mutual aid has been essential for survival in the preindustrial period (Butcher

and Einolf 2017, Einolf et al 2016). The practice of giving time to voluntary (philanthropic, charitable) organisations, within volunteer service programmes, is of recent history, it emerged around mid-1800s (ibid.). Appearance of formal voluntary organisations followed industrialization and urbanization (Butcher and Einolf 2017, Einolf et al 2016).

Formal volunteering requires institutional infrastructure – a developed non-profit sector. Thus, it can be expected that volunteering to organisations are dominant forms of giving time in more developed countries, with active non-profit sectors (Butcher and Einolf 2017). Also, it can be expected that direct help is a dominant form of giving in less developed countries (ibid.). Finally, direct help is expected to be replaced by formal institutions, either through state welfare support or the non-profit sector, in developed societies (ibid.).

Global surveys such as the Gallup World Poll (GWP) and the World Values Survey (WVS) confirm that rates of giving of time to organisations are higher in developed countries than those in development or former socialist countries (World Giving Index 2015).

Cross-national studies in direct help is limited (Butcher and Einolf 2017, Bennett and Einolf 2017). The Gallup World Poll includes the question of helping a stranger.² Looking from a regional perspective at the Gallup World Poll data on helping strangers, it is notable that the differences in involvement between and to some extent within regions are much smaller compared to formal volunteering (Gavelin and Svedberg 2011). Thus, if direct help is not included in the analyses of individual giving of time, what we are left with is a distorted picture on the rates of giving in a country where such practices may predominate. The data on helping strangers shows that those living in Anglo-Saxon countries are most likely to help, as well as people from certain African, Middle Eastern, Latin American and Caribbean countries along with Western Europe (ibid.).

Questions about informal help are included in the European Social Survey, which frames informal help as “providing help for other people” excluding activities directed at family or colleagues, capturing informal support provided to neighbours, friends and strangers. There is a variation in informal volunteering among European nations, where countries in central Western Europe (Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany) tend to be highest in informal volunteering among the nations studied, while nations in Southern and Eastern Europe (Greece, Portugal, Spain, Poland, the Czech Republic) tend to rank lowest on average (Smith et al. 2016). Thus, direct help has not disappeared, nor diminished in developed countries (Einolf et al 2016, Salamon et al 2017). There is something more to human relations which cannot be replaced by formal organisations, no matter how efficient they may be in meeting the needs.

2 It should be stressed that helping a stranger is an unusual type of informal volunteering, substantially different from actions of mutual help and support within networks of family and neighbours which is the majority of informal volunteering (Butcher and Einolf 2017). However, since definitions of informal volunteering vary across societies, it is difficult to design a comprehensive and cross-nationally comparable survey measure of informal volunteering (Bennett and Einolf 2017).

3. Who Gives Time?

The propensity to giving time is usually not equal across the adult population. Some socio-demographic groups are more likely to give their time than others (Rochestwer et al. 2010). In this section I will provide theoretical explanations of why propensity to give time vary according to gender, age, marital and employment status, level of formal education, personal income and self-reported health. Also, I will provide empirical evidence.

Gender

Gender differences in giving time can be ascribed to differences in psychology and moral thinking, social norms, as well as to personal resources (such as level of education, income, free time, etc.) and social resources (embedded in relations with others). An orientation toward relationships and interdependence has been associated with the psychology of women (Gilligan 1993). Women's moral judgments are tied to feelings of empathy and compassion (*ibid*). They often define and judge themselves in their capacity to care for others (Gilligan 1993, Noddings 2013). The explanation for this might lie in normative conceptions of what gender roles should consist of and the cultural and social values attributed to women's main domain of activity (Komter 2005). Social norms encourage women to take on helping roles within families, and to care for the personal and emotional needs of others (Wilson and Musick 1997). Finally, women are more socially integrated and with extended social networks (Einolf 2010).

Extended social networks and activity in formal and informal associations enhances the likelihood of being solicited to volunteer. Solicitation increases both the likelihood of giving time (Putnam 2000, Wilson 2012) and the number of hours volunteered (Sokolowski 1996). The study of the probabilities that people will volunteer time given they have been solicited or not solicited conducted on the 1994 Independent Sector Survey of Giving and Volunteering in the USA shows that 80% of those solicited for volunteering did volunteer (Bryant et. al. 2003).

However, giving time requires command over personal resources, both material and non-material. Men are advantaged with respect to levels of income and education (Wit and Bekkers 2015). Women do more housework, childcare and care of kin than men (Kahn, McGill, Bianchi 2011). Thus, due to their commitments with household chores and care for children, women often have less free time at their disposal than men.

Empirical studies show that women are in the centre of support networks and that they are more likely to provide care and in general do more informal helping (Gundelach, Frietag and Stadelmann-Steffen 2010, Helms and McKenzie 2013, Wilson and Musick 1997). Not only is there the direct effect of gender on informal helping, but women are more likely to attach greater value to helping others, which encourages helpful behaviour in general (Wilson and Musick 1997).

Gender differences in formal volunteering vary from country to country. For example, women are more likely to volunteer than men in the United States

(Wilson and Musick 1997, Musick and Wilson 2008), Australia, the United Kingdom, Japan (Musick and Wilson 2008), the Netherlands and Italy (Dekker and van den Broek 1998), while men are more likely to volunteer in Sweden (Musick and Wilson 2008) and Germany (Helms and McKenzie 2013).

Age

Age is an indicator of the stage of life a person has reached (Musick and Wilson 2008). The life cycle consists of three major stages: an early stage devoted to socialisation and formal education, a middle stage devoted to setting up a home, forming a family, and working to support it; and in a third phase two major events are children leaving home and retirement (ibid.). The stage of the life cycle influences the amount of material and non-material resources people have at disposal, the way they are integrated in society, and their priorities and interests (ibid.). Young and elderly people are more likely to have more free time than those in the middle stage (ibid.). However, young and middle-aged people are more likely to be integrated into social networks through school, university and work and thus more likely to be asked to volunteer, while the elderly can shift from taking care of their children to providing benefits to others (ibid.).

Musick and Wilson (2008) explain the relationship between volunteering and life cycle, drawing conclusions from the empirical data from the United States. The rate of volunteering is higher in adolescence than it is in early adulthood (ibid.). This is probably because schools, churches, and other youth-oriented institutions encourage or even require community service of their young people. Also, young adults are pressured commitments at work or universities. Middle-aged people are the most likely to volunteer, probably because they begin to settle down with established careers, greater integration in the community, and children in local schools. Once children leave school, there is a decline in parent volunteering. However, volunteering does not seriously fall off until people reach old age, when shortage of money, lack of transportation, decline in health and social isolation make it difficult to volunteer (ibid.). The same pattern is found for informal volunteering, which increases with age and then declines late in life (Gundelach, Frietag and Stadelmann-Steffen 2010).

Marital Status

Getting married is one of the major events that alter our resources in fundamental ways, priorities and social networks (Musick and Wilson 2008). It influences how people choose to spend our financial resources and free time (ibid.).

Married people have larger social networks and thus may be more often asked to give. The data on partner status and volunteering are inconclusive. Married individuals are more likely to volunteer (Wilson 2000), and they also provide more direct help than people who are single (Gundelach, Frietag and Stadelmann-Steffen 2010).

Employment Status

People who are employed have less free time at their disposal than the unemployed, retirees and students. Succeeding in one's career necessitates hard

work and long hours which conflicts with volunteering (Wuthnow 1991). Thus, being employed may be an impediment to volunteering.

However, although having a job leaves less free time, it also helps us enhance social networks and increases our chances of learning about volunteering opportunities or being asked to volunteer (Musick and Wilson 2008). Being employed means greater social integration, which in turn may lead to volunteering (Putnam 2000, Sokolowski 1996, Wilson 2012). If the time squeeze theory holds, we can expect that the retired and unemployed are more likely to volunteer than the employed. While, if the theory of social integration holds, then the employed and students would be more likely to give their time.

Empirical data from the USA show that people with jobs are more likely to volunteer (Musick and Wilson 2008). When it comes to informal volunteering, hours spent in paid employment are found to be negatively correlated with informal volunteering (Gundelach, Freitag and Stadelmann-Steffen 2010).

Education

Education is an important resource. Through education people gain the skills and competences necessary to perform different voluntary activities in organisations (Musick and Wilson 2008). Also, through education people become capable of critical examination of societal problems and finding possible ways of addressing them (ibid.).

Moreover, educated people have more expansive social networks and thus they are more likely to hear about available opportunities to volunteer (ibid.). They are also more likely to have higher trust in other people and they tend to join more social organizations (Huang et al. 2009). Education is “strong and robust correlate of individual social capital” (ibid:460).

There is plenty of empirical evidence that education is one of the most powerful predictors of virtually all forms of altruistic behaviour (Putnam 2000). Studies from different countries show that volunteers are more educated than non-volunteers (Musick and Wilson 2008).

Health

Good health is a personal resource without which many activities could not be performed (Musick and Wilson 2008). A person with poor health must expend much more energy in order to help than a person in good health, if it is at all possible for her to provide help to others. People with health problems, due to often expensive medical treatment, have fewer financial resources at their disposal to give to organisations and people in need. However, people who have suffered certain illnesses can put themselves in the position of others with the same problems more easily and thus should be more likely to give to them.

Self-rated health and volunteering are positively related in many studies (Musick and Wilson 2008). Some of the health effects on volunteering are mediated by other factors such as social class and social integration (ibid.). Healthier people tend to have higher incomes and levels of education which are positively related to giving, and they also tend to socialise more and thus are more likely to be asked to volunteer (ibid.).

Income

When thinking about volunteering as an unpaid labourer, it can be argued that the more one earns the less likely is he is to volunteer since it is more rational for him to spend his time working for a wage than to provide labour for free (Musick and Wilson 2008). Thus, income and volunteering should be negatively related. However, we can think of volunteering as an activity that requires material resources. The costs of volunteering are not only in the form of time, but there are also related material costs (ibid.). For example, transportation costs for a volunteer. Moreover, people with a higher income tend to belong to a greater number of associations and thus are more likely to be asked to volunteer. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is that the more one earns, the more likely she is to volunteer. Empirical data shows that income and disposition to volunteering are positively related (ibid).

4. Evidence from Serbia

There are no comprehensive analyses of volunteering in Serbia. Several surveys which included questions on volunteering have been conducted. In 2017, *Pew Research Center* (PRC) published a report on *Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe* which included donating money and volunteering time for organisations. Serbia has also been a part of global surveys that provide comparative statistics on volunteering such as Gallup World Poll (GWP)³ and the World Values Survey (WVS). These surveys frame and measure it mostly in terms of volunteering to organisations. They provide only the data on the rates of volunteering, without further analyses of the characteristics of volunteering and volunteers. The shares of volunteers in the adult population as found out in these three researchers are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. Volunteering to an Organisation

Share in adult population	
PRC	11%*
GWP	6%**
WVS	10%***

*Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016

** Survey conducted in 2014

*** WVS wave 1999–2004

3 Based on the Gallup World Poll, the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) releases a yearly report on the “World Giving Index”. World Giving Index is created by averaging the responses from the three questions: “Have you done anything in the past month: Donated money to a charity? Volunteered your time to an organisation? Helped a stranger or someone you did not know who needed help?” (CAF website). Although the Gallup World Poll includes the question on helping a stranger, all other forms of giving time for the benefit of others and the common good are not covered, such as for example addressing problems in informal groups.

The rates of volunteering are found to be between 6% and 11%. Such small rates of formal volunteering are related to the characteristics of the non-profit sector in Serbia. The non-profit sector in Serbia is relatively young and small (Velat 2015). More than half of the non-profit organisations (52%) were established in 2010 and later, around one quarter (26%) between 2001 and 2009 and about 13% by 1989. The smallest number of associations, only 9%, was established between 1990 and 2000. The total income of the non-profit sector as a share of GDP is only 0.75%, while the sector employs 0.63% of all employed in 2014 (ibid).⁴

Many organisations founded before the 1990s are self-help organisations, they also encompass a variety of international and national organisations including the Red Cross, UNICEF, voluntary fire-brigades, auto-moto clubs, professional associations, pensioners' associations, cultural and sports clubs and hobby groups (ibid.). Although during the 1990s Serbia was lacking a favourable legal framework, a great number of non-profit organisations emerged, with the support of international donors (Kolin 2005, Kolin 2009). The majority of them were part of the political opposition, anti-war groups, peace organisations and human rights NGOs (ibid.). In addition, non-profit organisations providing social welfare emerged through the 1990s. Many of them with international support have developed into professionalised organisations that are engaged in advocacy and capacity-building in social policy, good governance, human rights and economic development (TASCO 2016). After political and social changes in 2000, a wave of smaller, community-based initiatives and organisations that focus on social, environmental, economic, and other issues in the community emerged (ibid.).

When we look at the structure of the non-profit sector organisations' budgets, the largest share comes from financing based on projects (28%) and membership fees (24%), then from voluntary work (14%), self-financing (13%), institutional support (12%), while the smallest shares come from voluntary contributions (8%) and gifts (2%) (Velat 2011). Thus, only 14% of the budget comes from voluntary work.

Not only is the non-profit sector relatively small, but the public perception of its role and significance is rather negative (TASCO 2016). Only 58% of Serbians knows what a non-profit organisation is, while more than a half of them believe that non-profits cannot help them in dealing with their and their families' problems (ibid.). Moreover, only 12% of Serbians believe that the non-profit organisations work in the public interest (ibid.). Such perception certainly discourages people to get more actively engaged in the non-profits in Serbia. However, they might be willing to give their time to other types of organisations, to informal groups or directly to people in need.

4 As a comparison with the neighbouring countries, total income of the non-profit sector as a share of GDP was in Macedonia 0.96% and in Montenegro 0.58% (Velat 2015). Thus, in the Balkan countries total income of the non-profit sector as a share of GDP is below 1%. However, in the USA it is 5.3% (US Bureau of Economic Analysis), while in Canada 8.1% (Imagine Canada). When it comes to employment, 0.38% of all employed in Macedonia and 0.37% in Montenegro is employed in the non-profit Sector. Approximately 10.3% of the private sector workforce in the USA was employed in the non-profit sector in 2014 (US Bureau of Labour Statistics) while 11.1% of the economically active population in Canada (Imagine Canada).

4.1. Methodology

The questions of interest to this paper include: How many people in Serbia volunteer their time to formal organisations, informal groups and provide direct help to people? Who gives time in Serbia?

The data analysed in this paper are original data from the national survey which focused on pro-social behaviour in Serbia and was conducted in 2014. The target population were fifteen– year-olds and older, excluding the institutionalised persons. The sample is national representative sample. The sample was selected to provide statistically reliable estimates at the national level. The surveying was carried out in the period 12th May– 30th August 2014. Interviews were conducted face-to-face. The total number of individuals envisaged for interviewing was 1,600. A total of 1,528 individuals (95.5%) were interviewed.

The respondents were asked about giving time in the past 12 months.⁵ To avoid the ambiguity of the term volunteering (in Serbian translated as *volontiranje*, *dobrovoljni rad*, *dobrotvorni rad*), the respondents were asked whether they provided any unpaid work, help or assistance to formal organisations, informal groups or directly to individuals.

When it comes to formal organisations, the respondents were offered a list of organisations and asked if they provided any unpaid work or assistance to them in the previous 12 months. These organisations are: charitable (humanitarian) organisations⁶, other non-governmental organisations, churches and religious communities, schools, public social service providers (such as shelters for homeless, day care centres for the elderly, institutions for children without parental care, shelters for migrants, etc.), tenants' assembly, organisations of culture and arts, sport clubs, political parties, organisations of hobby, business organisations, trade union and other. Then, respondents were asked whether they participated in the activities for the benefit of the community on more informal bases, with their friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc. Finally, the respondents were asked about helping people on their own, including friends, neighbours, and relatives and excluding help given to the household members. Five types of help were analysed: 1) work at home such as cooking, cleaning, gardening, maintenance, painting, shovelling snow, or car repairs, 2) health-related or personal care such as emotional support, counselling, providing advice, visiting the elderly, unpaid babysitting, 3) shopping or driving someone to the store or to an appointment, 4) paperwork tasks such as writing letters, filling out forms,

5 This research was a part of my PhD research on individual giving of time and money in Serbia and Canada. The questionnaire used in research in Serbia is adjusted from the questionnaire used in the Canadian *General Social Survey – Giving, Volunteering and Participating* (GSS:GVP).

6 It should be stressed that a charitable (humanitarian) organisation is not recognised as a distinct legal form in Serbia. What is colloquially known as a charitable or humanitarian organisation can take any of the forms non-profit organisations – association, endowment, foundation, which are regulated and recognised by the *Law on Associations* from 2009 and the *Law of Endowments and Foundations* from 2010. Since the term charitable and humanitarian organisation is well known to the public and thus it is used in this questionnaire.

banking, paying bills or finding information and 5) teaching, coaching, tutoring, or assisting with reading.

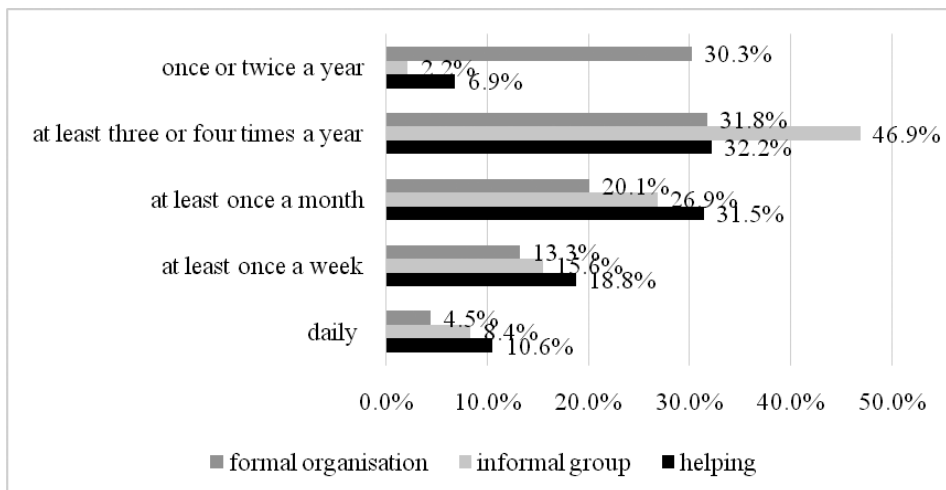
In mid-May 2014, Serbia was hit by an extensive flooding. On 15th of May 2014 the Government declared a state of emergency for its entire territory. The surveying for this research has just started when the floods occurred. As natural disasters prompt giving behaviour (Musick and Wilson 2008), the rates of volunteering at the time of this natural disaster were certainly higher than they would have been if the floods had not happened.

4.2. Rates and Frequencies of Volunteering and Helping

Approximately a quarter of the inhabitants of Serbia (27.7%) volunteered their time to a formal organisation within a period of one year. My research finds a higher rate of volunteering than was found in the previous studies. There could be several likely explanations for this difference in the rates of volunteering. It could be due to the different reference periods. The reference period in the GWP is a month, while it is a year in my research, as it is in the WVS and PRC studies. It might also be that due to the floods, greater number of Serbians volunteered in 2014 than in 2015/16. Finally, it could be that framing the questions as giving time to a list of organisations rather than as “volunteering to organisations” helped respondents recall activities which are considered as volunteering, but which respondents do not recognise as such (Rochester et al. 2010). Perhaps, the joint influence of these factors created differences in the rates of volunteering between the studies.

Five types of organisations to which the most inhabitants of Serbia volunteered are charitable organisations (12.4%), church (8.3%), school (7.8%), a sports club (5.5%) and public institutions for social services (5.4%).

Figure 1. Share of volunteers to different types of organisations in adult population



When it comes to participating in informal groups, 22.8% were engaged in activities for the benefit of the community on a more informal bases, with their friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc., which is a slightly smaller number than that of respondents who reported volunteering to formal organisations. Although a slightly greater portion of inhabitants of Serbia volunteer to formal organisations than informal groups, the rate of those who dedicate their time through informal groups is higher than the rate of volunteering for any of the analysed types of organisations.

Looking at both formal and informal volunteering, we can conclude that 40.5% of inhabitants of Serbia dedicated their time to organisations and groups. This indicates that the magnitude of volunteering can vary between the studies, based on how volunteering is conceptualised, as already stressed in the literature (Butcher and Einolf 2017, Rochester et al. 2010).

Most of the volunteers in informal groups (62.5%) were engaged in the cleaning and maintenance of communal areas, followed by those who provided help to a vulnerable family (13.5%) and participated in flood relief activities (11.2%). Thus, the majority of activities of informal groups are undertaken for the benefit of the community to which one belongs to.

As many as 71.2% of inhabitants of Serbia provided help to someone outside their household. Five types of help were analysed: 1) work at home such as cooking, cleaning, gardening, maintenance, painting, shovelling snow, or car repairs, 2) health-related or personal care such as emotional support, counselling, providing advice, visiting the elderly, unpaid babysitting, 3) shopping or driving someone to the store or to an appointment, 4) paperwork tasks such as writing letters, filling out forms, banking, paying bills or finding information and 5) teaching, coaching, tutoring, or assisting with reading.

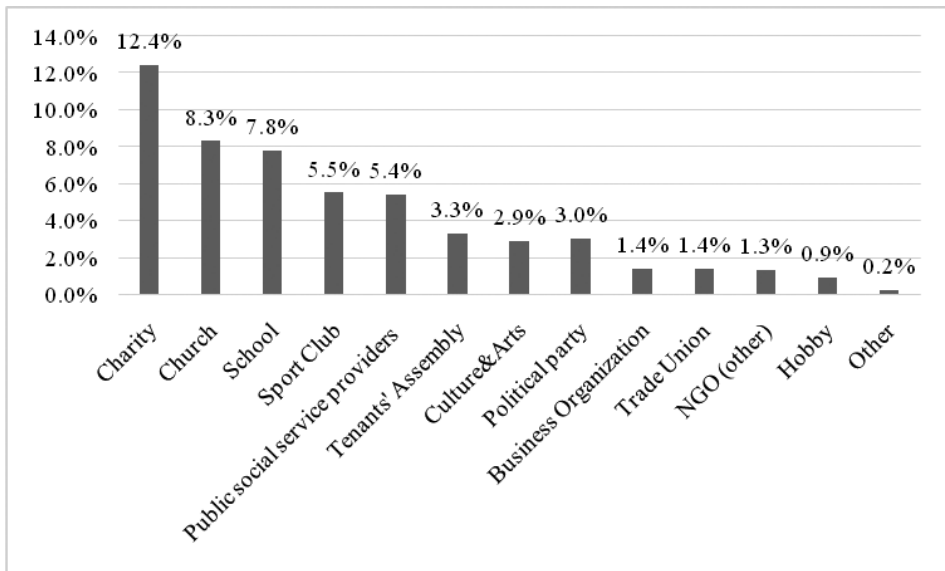
Approximately half provided help with work at home and health-related or personal care. Another common activity was shopping or driving someone to the store or to an appointment, followed by paperwork tasks. Unpaid teaching, coaching, tutoring, or assisting with reading were practiced the least.

Table 2. Types of Help

Share of adult population	
work at home	50.2%
health-related or personal care	48.7%
shopping for, or driving someone	46.5%
paperwork tasks	32.1%
unpaid teaching, coaching, tutoring, assisting with reading	17.0%

This research shows that providing direct help to people (71.2%) is by far a more common activity than volunteering to formal organisations (27.7%) and informal groups (22.8%) in Serbia, which is in line with what has been found in studies in other countries. Not only is helping people directly more common activity, but it is also more often practiced than volunteering to formal organisations and groups.

Figure 2. Frequency of Giving Time



4.3. Who Gives Time in Serbia?

In this section, we examine how the rates of giving time vary according to gender, age, marital status, employment status, formal education, personal, monthly income and self-reported health condition. These factors are discussed independently and the associations between the socio-demographic factors and giving time is tested using the chi square test and point biserial correlation.

Gender

The rates of giving time are higher among men than women in Serbia. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between gender and giving time. The relation between these variables was significant only in case of participating in informal groups.

There is a possibility that lack of resources is an impediment for women to engage in informal volunteering in Serbia. However, since the activities of informal groups are mostly related to maintenance of communal areas, it could also be that men engage more than women due to the predominant type of activities of informal groups.

Table 3. Giving Time by Gender

	Organisation (all types)	Informal Groups	Individuals (all types of help)
Male	29.0%	26.4%	73.4%
Female	26.6%	19.6%	71.6%
Chi Square Test	$\chi^2(1, N = 1,528) = 2.593,$ $p = 0.107$	$\chi^2(1, N = 1,507) = 10.080,$ $p = 0.001$	$\chi^2(1, N = 1,528) = 0.658,$ $p = 0.417$

Age

According to the chi square, there is a statistically significant relationship between age and giving time. Young people are more likely to give time than their older fellow citizens. While 41.8% of young Serbians (15 to 24-year olds) volunteer for organisations, 29.4% participate in informal groups and 82.6% provide direct help to individuals, only 16.2% of seniors (65 years and older) volunteer, 14.1% are engaged with an informal group and 52.5% help individuals directly. This might be attributed to the fact that the elderly are likely to be socially isolated (Stojilković and Dinić 2012).

Table 4. Giving Time by Age

	Organisation (all types)	Informal Groups	Individuals (all types of help)
15–24	41.8%	29.4%	82.6%
25–34	36.7%	24.0%	84.5%
35–44	27.9%	26.2%	80.3%
45–54	27.3%	27.3%	75.6%
55–64	22.7%	19.8%	67.8%
65+	16.2%	14.1%	52.5%
Chi Square Test	$\chi^2(5, N = 1,522) = 48.016,$ $p < 0.001$	$\chi^2(5, N = 1,501) = 102.238,$ $p < 0.001$	$\chi^2(5, N = 1,522) = 102.238,$ $p < 0.001$

Marital status

Based on their marital status, respondents are divided into four categories: single, divorced, widowed and married. The rates of giving time are the lowest among the widowed. Since the widowed are most likely to be found among the elderly (74% of the widowed in Serbia are 65 +), who are least likely to volunteer and singles tend to be in the age group that volunteer the most (15–24), this difference may, to some extent, be related to the age of the respondents. The rates of giving are the highest among the single, except in the case of those participating in informal groups in Serbia, where divorcees are slightly more likely to get involved than those who are single (25.5% to 24.9%). However, the association between respondent's marital status and propensity to give time is not statistically significant.

Table 5. Giving Time by Marital Status

	Organisation (all types)	Informal Groups	Individuals (all types of help)
Single	35.6%	24.9%	76.9%
Divorced	33.1%	25.5%	74.8%
Widowed	15.8%	14.4%	51.9%
Married	26.0%	23.1%	74.4%
Chi Square Test	$\chi^2(3, N = 1,489) = 3.146,$ $p = 0.076$	$\chi^2(3, N = 1,469) = 1.717,$ $p = 0.190$	$\chi^2(3, N = 1,489) = 3.483,$ $p = 0.062$

Employment status

Based on their employment status, respondents are divided into four categories: students, employed, unemployed and retired. There is a statistically significant relationship between respondent's employment status and giving time. The rates of formal volunteering, participating in informal groups and helping individuals directly are the highest among students, followed by the employed. The retired are the least likely to give their time. Social integration and related social resources may be the explanation why students and the employed are the most likely to dedicate their time.

Table 6. Giving Time by Employment Status

	Organisation (all types)	Informal Groups	Individuals (all types of help)
Student	40.1%	34.1%	81.7%
Employed	33.7%	32.8%	81.7%
Unemployed	25.5%	18.4%	71.2%
Retired	17.6%	17.1%	59.1%
Chi Square Test	$\chi^2(3, N = 1,384) = 38.702,$ $p < 0.001$	$\chi^2(3, N = 1,366) =$ $34.291, p < 0.001$	$\chi^2(3, N = 1,384) = 62.210,$ $p < 0.001$
N	1,384	1,366	1,384

Education

The level of education is an important personal resource that enables volunteering. More educated people are more likely to have greater social networks, as well as valuable skills, and thus are more likely to be asked to give their time.

The rates of giving time are the smallest among respondents with less than a high-school diploma. University graduates are most likely to volunteer and provide direct help and the respondents with post-secondary diplomas are most likely to participate in informal groups in Serbia. However, the relationship is not statistically significant in case of volunteering to formal organisations and informal groups.

Table 7. Giving Time by Level of Education

	Organisation (all types)	Informal Groups	Individuals (all types of help)
Less than high school	20.4%	17.4%	58.0%
High school	25.9%	23.2%	74.1%
Post-secondary diploma	37.8%	29.9%	74.4%
University	40.1%	24.9%	85.1%
Chi Square Test	$\chi^2(3, N = 1,514) = 0.521,$ $p = 0.914$	$\chi^2(3, N = 1,493) = 0.553,$ $p = 0.907$	$\chi^2(3, N = 1,514) = 8.258,$ $p = 0.041$

Income

Although income could be an enabling factor to giving time, due to the related costs of volunteering, the relationship between income and volunteering is not a straightforward one. This research shows that there is no correlation between logarithm transformation of respondent's average, monthly income and volunteering, while there is a positive relationship between income and participating in informal groups and providing direct help, but the effect size is small.⁷

Table 8. Giving Time and Personal Income

Correlation between log transformation of income and giving time to:	Point-biserial correlation coefficient (r_{pb})	Sig. (2 tailed)
Organizations (all types)	0.049	p = 0.107
Informal groups	0.128	p <0.001
Individuals (all types of help)	0.109	p <0.001

Health

Health is another personal resource that enables giving time (Musick and Wilson 2008). Respondents whose self-reported health condition is poor are the least likely to give their time. •Serbians who give their time are more likely to be found among respondents with excellent and good health. Except in case of participating in informal groups, respondents' self-reported health and giving time are statistically significantly associated.

Table 9. Giving Time by Self-reported Health

	Organisation (all types)	Informal Groups	Individuals (all types of help)
Excellent	35.0%	23.9%	74.6%
Very good	34.6%	27.0%	78.8%
Good	26.1%	24.3%	76.2%
Fair	23.6%	19.1%	71.7%
Poor	14.5%	16.2%	49.7%
Chi Square Test	$\chi^2(4, N = 1,514) = 33.086$, p <0.001	$\chi^2(4, N = 1,493) = 5.346$, p=0.254	$\chi^2(4, N = 1,514) = 38.684$, p <0.001

5. Concluding remarks

All over the world people dedicate their time, energy and labour to benefit other people and support various causes. Neglecting the richness of the forms this can take, research on giving time has mostly focused on volunteering to organisations, particularly in developed countries. Providing empirical evidence from Serbia on volunteering to formal organisations, participating in informal groups and helping

7 Since a continues variable (income) is not normally distributed for each category of a dichotomous variable (donating to organisation, donating to unknown individuals, giving to known individuals), nor does it have equal variances, the logarithm transformation is performed as suggested by Field (2013).

people directly, this paper provides valuable insights in the characteristics of giving time in a former socialist country, research of which is scarce.

This paper shows that helping (71.2%) is by far a more common activity than volunteering to formal organisations (27.7%) and informal groups (22.8%). Looking at both formal and informal volunteering, we can conclude that 40.5% of inhabitants of Serbia dedicated their time to organisations and groups. This confirms that the magnitude of volunteering can vary between the studies, based on how volunteering is conceptualised. Not only that providing direct help to people is more common than volunteering to formal and informal organisations, but it is practiced much more often than other forms of volunteering.

The greatest number of volunteers reported giving time to charitable (humanitarian) organisations, followed by a church, a school, a sport club and public social service provides. The majority of informal groups gathered for the maintenance of communal areas, while direct assistance to individuals was provided by the greatest number in form of housework and health-related help.

There are differences in giving time according to socio-demographic characteristics. In general, respondents who reported giving time are likely to be found among the younger population, among students and those without health issues. However, different socio-demographic groups of population engage in different forms of giving time. Men are more likely than women to participate in the activities of informal groups, while there is no statistically significant relationship between gender and volunteering, as well as between gender and providing direct help. University graduates are more likely to provide direct help to individuals than respondents with less formal education, while education and volunteering to formal and informal organisations are not statistically significantly associated. There is also a positive correlation between logarithm transformation of respondent's average, monthly income and participating in informal groups, and with providing direct help, but there is no relationship between income and volunteering. Whether and how much these socio-demographic characteristics explain propensity to volunteer to formal organisations and informal groups and to provide direct help to people in Serbia need further examination.

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