

The experience of compulsory volunteering: the obstacles for voluntary sector in a post-soviet country Lithuania

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Summary. The aim of this study was to examine the compulsory volunteering experience under the Soviet regime and highlight specific reasons, which keep individuals away from getting involved in activities in voluntary organizations. The paper examines the factors, which keep individuals away from joining voluntary organizations, and examines what influence the experience of compulsory volunteering has. A qualitative research approach has been chosen. Respondents were individuals born between 1945 and 1965 and lived under the Soviet regime. 30 interviews were conducted with individuals who have not been involved in voluntary organizations.

The results reveal the understanding of the concept of volunteering, the factors, which keep individuals away from volunteering, and what role the experience of compulsory volunteering has played. Voluntary organizations can use the results in order to encourage potential volunteers to join their voluntary organizations.

Keywords: Motivation, Volunteering, Post-Soviet country, Compulsory volunteering, Motivation to volunteer.

Privalomosios savanorystės patirtis: kliūtys savanoriškam sektoriui posovietinėje šalyje Lietuvoje

Santrauka. Šio tyrimo tikslas – išnagrinėti privalomos savanoriškos veiklos patirtį sovietmečiu ir išskirti konkrečias priežastis, kurios trukdo asmenims įsitraukti į savanoriškų organizacijų veiklą. Straipsnyje nagrinėjami veiksniai, trukdantys asmenims tapti savanoriškų organizacijų nariais, nagrinėjama, kokią įtaką tam turi privalomos savanorystės patirtis. Pasirinktas kokybinio tyrimo metodas. Respondentai – asmenys, gimę 1945 – 1965 m. ir gyvenę sovietinio režimo sąlygomis. Buvo atlikta 30 interviu su asmenimis, kurie nebuvo įsitraukę į savanoriškų organizacijų veiklą.

Rezultatai atskleidžia savanorystės sampratą suvokimą, veiksnius, dėl kurių asmenys neįsitraukia į savanoriškų organizacijų veiklą, ir kokią įtaką tam turėjo privalomos savanorystės patirtis. Savanoriškos organizacijos gali pasinaudoti šio tyrimo rezultatais tam, kad paskatintų potencialius savanorius prisijungti prie organizacijų veiklos.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: motyvacija, savanorystė, posovietinė šalis, privaloma savanorystė, motyvacija savanoriauti.

Received: 14/11/2022. Accepted: 05/12/2022

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Introduction

Volunteering, according to Ellis & Noyes (1990:4) is described as actions “in recognition of a need, with an attitude of social responsibility and without concern for monetary profit, going beyond one’s basic obligations“. Volunteering is “recognized as the glue that helps hold societies together and as an additional resource of use in solving social and community problems“ (Hodgkinson, 2003). Volunteerism is recognized as an important source of sociability, satisfaction, and self-validation over the life course (Hendicks & Cutler, 2004). Studies evidence a positive correlation between the hours contributed by volunteers with the impact on the organization, the clients (recipients), the society and the community, and the volunteers themselves (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2011, p.139). People of different ages are involved in volunteering activities as volunteering provides a valuable opportunity to develop personal skills and improve personality as well as to increase economic satisfaction (Nichols & Shepard, 2006; Sharpe, 2006; Welsch & Long, 2006; Čábelková et al., 2015, as cited at Krajnakova et al., 2018; Strazdienė, 2019).

Research has been done to explain not only the phenomenon of volunteering but the national differences, and societies, which are directly related to the level of volunteering. Plagnol & Huppert (2009) in their study have found that different rates of volunteering cannot be explained by differences in the social, psychological, or social factors associated with volunteering. Results of the research conducted by Parboteeah, Cullen, & Lim (2004) show that all forms of capital, i.e. human, social and cultural have positive relationships with formal volunteering. Gil-Lacruz & Marcuello (2017) research results have shown that the most important differences in the level of volunteering lie in the impact of social factors rather than individual characteristics like gender or age. As a cultural and economic phenomenon, volunteering is part of the way societies are organized, how they allocate social responsibilities, and how much engagement and participation they expect from citizens (Anheier & Salamon, 1999). Western countries have very long traditions of volunteering and offer a wide range of activities. Differences exist in groups of countries. Volunteering as a formal activity performed for organizations or associations is an older activity in Western Europe, whereas in Central and Eastern Europe it is a comparatively new phenomenon that emerged after the collapse of the communist regime (Sillo, 2016). In the Soviet era, voluntary activities were controlled by the state. Some of the activities, like Parades, and Subbotniks were compulsory and could be avoided only when a legitimate reason was provided to the organizing committee. Individuals had to contribute their time for a common cause, which involved social, political or cultural activities. Merrill (2006) has noted that in Eastern European countries, which were under the Soviet regime, volunteering is understood as an encouraging form of civic engagement, when was discouraged during the Soviet Union period. Substantial differences between cultures in their values and norms (e.g. Inglehart, 1997) lead to different meanings and motives for volunteering (Gronlund, 2011).

The voluntary sector has a long tradition and is stronger in countries with a long experience of democracy. In emerging economies, volunteerism has started to gain awareness and acknowledgment by society after the collapse of authoritarian regimes. According

to Musick & Wilson (2008), former communist countries have lower national rates of formal volunteering compared to older democracies, although the level of volunteering has been increasing in post-soviet countries during the last two decades compared to Western European countries, where volunteering rates are either static or in decline. Cultural settings provide the socio-political models that regulate the requirements and possibilities for volunteering. The substantial differences between cultures in their values and norms (e.g. Inglehart 1997) lead to different meanings and motives for volunteering (Gronlund & Holmes, 2011). The political history of the country determines attitudes towards volunteering of different generations of the same country who have lived in a particular historical period.

At the moment the voluntary sector is researched from different perspectives. Seeking to understand the nature of this activity, scholars raise the question of what the driving forces of volunteering are. Research by Clary & Snyder (1999), Penner & Finkelstein (1998), Black & Jirovic (1999), Okun & Schultz (2003), and others have been focused on the motivation of volunteers. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was a sharp fall in civil organizations and activities, which would be performed for the benefit of society. How the experience of compulsory activities has influenced the willingness to get involved in voluntary activities, to become an active participant in voluntary organizations? People living under the Soviet regime didn't know how to be a volunteer or engage in any kind of activity of their own will.

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of compulsory volunteering experience under the Soviet regime and find reasons that discourage individuals from joining voluntary organizations.

A qualitative research approach has been chosen. Respondents were individuals born between 1945 and 1965 and lived under the Soviet regime. 30 interviews were conducted with individuals who have not been involved in voluntary organizations.

The results of the research expand the understanding of the concept of volunteering in Post Soviet countries; the factors, which keep individuals away from joining voluntary organizations and volunteering, and what role the experience of compulsory volunteering has played in their lack of motivation to get involved in voluntary activities.

The research brings practical value to voluntary organizations as they can find ways to attract individuals to their organizations. The research reveals specific factors that prevent individuals over 55 years old from joining voluntary organizations and how the individuals of the age group 55 and over could be attracted to voluntary organizations, having the experience of compulsory volunteering in mind. It is shown by previous research that the volunteering for older adults prevents isolation, bridges the generation gap, helps to engage with interests, increases mental health and provides a purpose.

Contextual background

Across Eastern Europe, communist regimes systematically co-opted voluntary activity, establishing it as a collective, compulsory, rigidly organized, and centrally directed form of unpaid labour (Bell et al., 2011). For almost 70 years, 15 Republics in Europe and

Asia –Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Belorussia, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, were under the regime of The Soviet Union, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which existed 1922-1991. Thus, any obligatory voluntary work (e.g. in communist organizations) cannot be regarded as voluntary work (Sillo, 2016). The term itself raises a contradiction as it describes volunteering performed without the main component of volunteering: free will. According to Khvorostianov & Remennick (2017), the meaning of volunteerism was completely hollowed. The communist regimes used collectivist movements, trade unions, and unpaid work as a tool to highlight the contribution to society, for its benefit. The term ‘involuntary volunteering’ used by Khvorostianov & Remennick (2017) emphasizes that these activities created rebellion and resistance to getting involved in voluntary activities that can still be felt nowadays. According to Musick & Wilson (2008) civic values and everything related to volunteer work was very rare and practically non-existent under the regime of the Soviet Union. Thus, volunteering was compulsory (Sillo, 2016) which sounds like an oxymoron.

Communism, unlike other authoritarian regimes, was particularly detrimental to associational life (Howard, 2003) as it purposely strived to ban any autonomous social life, and instead strived to supplant it with its own structures (Paturyan & Gevorgyan, 2016). The key public organization was the Communist party. All organizations, i.e. trade unions, and youth organizations were provided with all required resources to function like buildings, and places of gathering, in order to promote their activities. The importance of volunteering in the Soviet Union is also shown by the fact that these activities involved children as well as adults (Juknevičius and Savicka, 2003). The nature of these organizations was artificial as they were not initiated by society, and were under full state control, even though was publicly declared that they are non-governmental, voluntary, and they have their own regulations. These specific organizations, which included writers, journalists, and scientists, were part of other, larger organizations that were active all around the Soviet Union.

Compulsory activities that were performed during the existence of the Soviet Union:

- Parades and demonstrations - they were held on the 9th of May, the parade of the Revolution in October.
- Subbotniks – unpaid labor days in April. Subbotniks were organized to clean public places, collect garbage and perform other community services.
- Work camps – university students had to work in agriculture and construction.
- The Party – becoming a member of the Party was essential for a career and other benefits.
- Blood donations – duty to donate blood when asked to do so.

After the collapse of the Soviet regime, the transitional period started. The wave of optimism after gaining the independence of the country led to an opposite side effect in regard to civic engagement. The decline in volunteering in the transition economies of Eastern Europe could further be related to the disruptive impact of the economic collapse after 1990 on employment, income, and families (Plagnol, Huppert, 2010). After the col-

lapse of the Soviet Union, according to the Country Report (2010), volunteering was not a high priority in Lithuania. The links between governmental authorities and voluntary organizations were weak or nearly non-existing.

Volunteering in Lithuania

Volunteering in Lithuania is not that widespread or widely accepted in society. Civil society in general is considered to be weak and not well organized, following long years of Soviet rule and economic hardship that followed after the restoration of independence (Country report – Lithuania, 2010). The results of the report highlight that the reluctance of older people to get involved in voluntary activities is associated with the experience of “voluntary” activities during the Soviet time.

Only in the year 2001, the government of Lithuania made a resolution “The major principles of voluntary work conditions and procedures” (Nr. 1511; Žin., 2001, Nr. 106-3801). The purpose of this document was to provide clear rules for voluntary organizations, and the jurisdictional relationships between volunteers and voluntary organizations. The most important subject of this document was a clear definition of a ‘volunteer’. Volunteers, according to the document, are individuals, who perform an action for the benefit of society of their own free will, without coercion and without being remunerated. Voluntary work may be performed by citizens of the Republic of Lithuania and foreign citizens and stateless persons legally present in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as volunteers). Since 2007, voluntary activities are part of the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania. In 2010, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania prepared the law “The law of voluntary activities” (2011-07-13, Nr. 86-4142), which included definitions, as well as main principles of voluntary organizations and described control of voluntary organizations.

The Eurobarometer survey completed in 2007 revealed that 11% of citizens had been involved in voluntary activities, compared with 5% in 1998. The data from 2010, shows that 20% of individuals had been involved in voluntary activities (non-regular), and only 4% of individuals were involved in long-term activities.

Even though the legislation to support voluntary organizations exists, the system provides bureaucratic obstacles, which do not allow for the voluntary sector to flourish.

Baršauskienė, Butkevičienė, & Vaidelytė (2009) emphasized that the majority of organizations existing in the non-profit sector are oriented toward social and cultural spheres; the main focus together with governmental institutions is to provide social services to the groups in need of this type of services.

An independent institution of public opinion and market research has completed research (2010) regarding the low volunteering rates and its slow development. The results show that these were influenced by:

- lack of volunteering tradition in the country (51%);
- lack of information about volunteering possibilities (42%);

- education about volunteering and positive attitude towards unselfishness, altruism is not promoted in schools (38%).

The survey provided information about the general point of view of society. The main attitudes towards volunteering:

- wrong assumptions and understanding of the concept of volunteering, i.e. volunteering is associated with charity, with long hours dedicated to specific activity;
- the benefits provided by voluntary action are not fully understood and valued;
- mistrustful and suspicious attitude towards voluntary activities, which are performed without pay;
- voluntary activities are not acknowledged as valued working experience.

To promote volunteering, as The European Union has designated 2011 as the „European Year of Volunteering”, there were several groups selected, where volunteering should be promoted.

The main focus groups were:

- students and schoolchildren. Since 2018, the volunteering experiences add 0.25 points when applying to universities;
- elderly individuals. Volunteering is promoted through projects like “54+”, which aims to provide conditions for elderly individuals to be involved in voluntary activities, to be involved in solving social issues, and to be more competitive in the employment market;
- unemployed individuals. Volunteering as an employment option is promoted by the Lithuanian Employment Service. The institution promotes volunteering as a productive activity during the period of unemployment. It states that the time spent volunteering would be acknowledged as the time spent being employed in the voluntary organization.

When compared with other western countries, individuals choose to volunteer, according to McEwin & Jacobsen-D’Arcy (2002) because of:

- values – the individual gets involved in voluntary action in order to express particular values he holds, and because he/she believes it is important it is to help others.
- career – individuals see volunteering as a beneficial activity for their future career. Also, activity can be seen as a tool to gain specific skills, which can be helpful when looking for employment.
- personal growth – volunteering very often becomes an inseparable part of the individual’s point of view of “what life is about”, how volunteering changes the understanding of what is happening around in society, and the feeling of self-worth.
- recognition – when an individual performs a voluntary act the recognition is received from the beneficiary of the act, from organization members, and also the other member of the social circle.
- hedonistic – the joy of being able to help someone, to be useful to work on a specific cause. It can work as an antecedent of personal growth.

- social – the appreciation of being around other individuals, who share the same values, the ability to build social networks and interact with other people.
- reactive – the individual feels the obligation to solve the debt for a certain cause, or issue, which has happened in the past.
- reciprocity – the belief that volunteering is an exchange, you perform the action in order to work for the higher purpose, and if there is a belief that this activity might bring something in the future (non-materialistic return).

Methodology

The purpose of the research is to understand the reasons that keep individuals away from joining voluntary organizations, why they do not participate in voluntary activities, and whether the experience of “compulsory volunteering” influences their decision to stay away from this type of organization.

The qualitative research method was chosen as it allows for the description and understanding of main themes, and allows to reveal experiences of respondents. Open-ended questions allow respondents to describe personal experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 individuals – 11 male, and 19 female, who are aged 55-75 years, living in Lithuania. 15 respondents are working at the moment; 15 respondents are retired (M=64.47 years). The interviews have been conducted June 2021 – December 2021 via telephone and face-to-face. Criteria for participation were for an individual to have the experience of participating in compulsory activities during the Soviet regime and not being an active member of voluntary organizations.

Table 1. Interview respondents

| Employment status | NON-VOLUNTEERS | | | | Employment status | NON-VOLUNTEERS | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|-------------------|----------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| | Age | Gender | Education | Code | | Age | Gender | Education | Code |
| EMPLOYED | 60 | Female | University degree | NS1WD | RETIRED | 70 | Female | Non University degree | NS17WP |
| | 64 | Male | University degree | NS3MD | | 74 | Male | Vocational | NS20MP |
| | 56 | Female | Vocational | NS8WD | | 66 | Female | University degree | NS22WP |
| | 59 | Female | Non University degree | NS9WD | | 74 | Female | University degree | NS24WP |
| | 62 | Male | University degree | NS10MD | | 76 | Female | University degree | NS25WP |
| | 58 | Female | University degree | NS11WD | | 71 | Female | University degree | NS26WP |
| | 51 | Female | University degree | NS13WD | | 68 | Female | University degree | NS28 |
| | 58 | Female | University degree | NS2WD | | 70 | Female | Non University degree | NS29 |
| | 58 | Female | University degree | NS4WD | | 66 | Female | University degree | NS16WP |
| | 64 | Female | University degree | NS5WD | | 67 | Female | University degree | NS18WP |
| | 56 | Female | Non University degree | NS6WD | | 70 | Male | University degree | NS19MP |
| | 60 | Male | University degree | NS7MD | | 72 | Male | University degree | NS21MP |
| | 60 | Female | University degree | NS12WD | | 68 | Male | University degree | NS23MP |
| | 54 | Male | Vocational | NS14MD | | 72 | Male | Vocational | NS27MP |
| | 57 | Male | University degree | NS15MD | | 73 | Male | University degree | NS30 |

Religious voluntary organizations have been excluded from the research due to their values and beliefs. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, coded. MAXQDA analysis software was used to analyze the interviews.

Results

The analysis of the data allowed us to investigate what compulsory activities were performed during the period of the Soviet Union. Respondents shared their memories about the actions they had to perform and what memories resurface when specific compulsory activity is discussed.

The interviews about the Soviet period allowed the researcher to group the main motives that prevent individuals from joining voluntary organizations. The respondents were coded according to their volunteering status (volunteer - S, non-volunteer – NS), gender, i.e. (woman - M or man – V), and employment status (employed - D, retired - P) and the information about the coded segment.

Table 2. List of reasons for not joining voluntary organizations

| Quotes | First order codes | Second order codes |
|---|---|---|
| Our people are exhausted, tired, and do not have the time to think about the help to others. Especially, when it's not paid for. (NS2MD: 22) | No habit of helping for free | Compulsory volunteering activities during Soviet period |
| There was no respect for an individual. You're not getting what you're worth and other criteria are used to determine your worth. ... (NS24MP: 67) | Disrespect for an individual | |
| I do believe that we have had a long history of someone deciding for us. Everything after school was partially decided for us as soon as we enter the university. (NS18MP: 16) | Lack of tradition of taking initiative | |
| Why should I waste my time on someone who I do not know when I can spend time with my family? Why? (NS2WD: 32). | No understanding about volunteering | Lack of understanding about volunteering |
| People are tired. They are on burnout. Life was tough for the elderly. The majority are affected by poverty. It impacts people. When it's hard to survive, when you're not paid enough (NS28MP: 46) | Low income level | Low income and low level of living |
| When there is so much freedom around us, the majority will always choose to „do nothing“. This is the price we pay for democracy. (NS10VD: 22) | Possibility to choose what to do or not to do | Freedom of choice |
| I would rather help someone in particular by giving money, food, goods, or any other form of help. I do like to know who is getting the help. When you do not know who will receive the help, I'm not willing to help at all. (NS7VD: 36) | Distrust involuntary organizations | Distrust in voluntary organizations |
| Where the distrust comes from? From daily life. There are so many stories about money from funds, and the expected recipients do not see them at all. (NS10VD: 35-36) | Misuse of funds | |

| Quotes | First order codes | Second order codes |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| There are no voluntary organizations in our village. Is it possible for a voluntary organization to exist when there are only 1000 inhabitants? (NS2MD: 6) | No organizations around | Distribution of voluntary organizations |
| I buy something when they are making those one-day events. If it goes to those who really need it, it's a decent help in my opinion. (NS2MD: 24) | Help using money | Donations as an alternative to volunteering |
| At our company we support many causes, and we share our profits. I know where the money will be sent to. We're not wasting them and giving to the right causes only. (NS7VD: 18) | Help through work of employment | |
| I'm very busy at work, I have responsibilities at home. I don't think that doing something extra is for my age. (NS7VD: 40) | Age | Age |
| I can't say that there is something in my way to get involved. But I do work a lot, I don't have much time to do something extra next to my current occupation. (NS1MD:48). | Lack of time | Time |

Compulsory volunteering activities during the Soviet Period

The Soviet experience was an important part of the respondents' daily life. They recognize the difficulties of the period. The most positive thing they mention about the period was their youth. Living under a regime, where the individual opinion is not valued, where rules of life are stagnant, and where there is a lack of freedom certainly shapes an individual. The disrespect, which is remembered, is related to oppression. *People are so tired, and overtired and they spend little time thinking about helping others when it's unpaid especially (NS2MD: 22)*. They were expecting to receive, and if something is given to others, it was expected to receive money or any other reward for it. The ability to choose should not be questioned, according to respondents *"When you say that it's voluntary, I use my right and ability to be free and do not belong to any organization and to do something for free (NS13WD: 45)"*. The negative attitude towards donations and volunteering has influenced how individuals might look at it nowadays.

The inability to choose - to participate or not is a trait of the Soviet period. *People can make a choice to go or not to go nowadays. At the time, it wasn't discussed and the choice was non-existent. (S21VP: 37)*. In activities like Subbotniks *"Subbotniks were the days we weren't waiting for since the beginning of Spring <...> At that moment it was pain and hard labour despite the fact that we were able to make it fun a little bit. All activities performed were worth nothing (NS1MD: 12)"*, parades were a rule during the Soviet period without the right of violating it, unless there was a very serious reason for that, and also work camps *"Work camps remind me of my student years. <...> Every autumn they were taking us to work. We were working outside, working in agriculture (NS8MD: 12)*. The Soviet regime disabled individuals from taking the initiative themselves, as the central planning of the Party influenced the daily life of everyone. *We're so passive, we don't want to leave our homes. I look at myself and I see that I have to convince myself*

to go somewhere (NS5MD: 38). The fear to express your opinion and no respect for the individual opinion without facing unfavourable consequences is something that was very common during Soviet times. “*At the beginning of the 90s, we were living under wild conditions, now knowing how to behave and what to say or not to say as we didn't believe that expressing your opinion about sensitive matters would not cause any harm (S8MD:34)*”.

The ideology has put a lot of pressure on individuals. It was deciding what is accepted and what is not. *We had a relatively calm life, as we didn't have to think if there will be a job for me after the university. In a way, it was providing the comfort of safety in a way (NS5MD: 20)*. Memories of coercion or compulsion, stop individuals to get involved in something, that benefits society. It leads to, according to respondents to lack of compassion and an unwillingness to care for others.

Lack of understanding about volunteering

Volunteering during the Soviet period was related to helping the ones who were nearby, i.e. friends, and family, and doing activities for the benefit of the society, which was controlled by the state. The concept of volunteering was not clear and respondents do think that some people still carry that lack of understanding of what volunteering to nowadays. *We are not used to things like volunteering. Most of my generation does not comprehend the need for it, and why it's needed. (NS10VD: 56)*. Volunteering is associated with worthless activity when there's no close connection with the recipient. In this case, helping a person you do not know loses the purpose of providing help. *The word 'volunteering' is new to me. I think that I don't understand how people are going somewhere after work to do something (NS7VD: 14)*. The lack of understanding of the volunteering concept can be associated with narrow views as well. „*Maybe as we are living in the village, we are stubborn, we do not see a possibility for action (NS2MD: 43)*.

The lack of knowledge about the variety of voluntary organizations and what voluntary activities they offer prevents people from getting involved. *I'm thinking that maybe my mindset is too old in order for me to volunteer (NS11MD: 37)*. The mindset regarding volunteering, the concept of it might be related to age, and how the understanding of volunteering has been evolving.

Low income and low level of living

The idea behind being tired or having burnout is related to the difficult living conditions some of the respondents and their family has had in their life. Their memory goes back to the time when people were exiled to Siberia. *When we came to Siberia, we had absolutely nothing. Poverty was in every aspect of our lives. I cannot even describe in words what survival mode we were living under (NS20MP: 25)*. When you have been living in fear for such a long time, it is difficult to adjust to a new way of life, and new circumstances, when the memories are relatively fresh. It was very obvious in the first years of independence when there was a huge shift and a lot of uncertainty in everyday life. *After the collapse,*

the focus was on how to live now, and what will happen now. In the first years [of independence] there were no thoughts that I'm missing something <...> At that time we have turned one survival regime. We didn't care much about what was happening around us, does the society or somebody else in need of help (NS1MD: 20). The young independency of the state had created a sense of instability in major areas of life – social security, social services, public safety, etc. *People are so tired and exhausted that they spend little time thinking about the help to others when it's unpaid especially (NS2MD: 22).* It is important to mention that retired respondents have highlighted this particular reason more often than employed respondents. *How retired people can think of volunteering, when they are on pensions like this (NS1MD:46).* Low income among retired people is an important factor that explains why this age group is less likely to volunteer. Respondents associate a willingness to volunteer with a certain standard of living, i.e. the basic need of a person are fulfilled. They see a contradiction between a low standard of living and volunteering. It is important to mention that there are considerations if everyone is seeking help because they are in need. *People are tired. They are on burnout. Life was tough for the elderly. The majority are affected by poverty. It impacts people. When it's had to survive, when you're not paid enough (NS28MP: 46).* Low income and difficult living conditions are making an impact when it comes to volunteering. When individuals are in need of help, they are not in a position to think about providing help to others.

Freedom of choice

The experience of compulsory volunteering has the opposite effect when it comes to the choice to volunteer or not. The ability to choose should not be questioned, according to respondents *“When you say that it's voluntary, I use my right and ability to be free and do not belong to any organization and to do something for free (NS13WD: 45)”*. During the Soviet period the refusal to perform an activity was not questioned or accepted. The arguments about volunteering as doing something for the benefit of society are not convincing enough among respondents. Work or activity performed without monetary reward is not even considered. *When there's a lot of freedom, the majority will always choose to do nothing about it. That's the price we pay when we have democracy (NS10VD:19).* The freedom of choice, as noted by respondents enables individuals to participate in activities they do believe in, to use their own time as they want to, and in most cases, the choice is to do nothing about it. The privilege of democracy is valued, as it provides freedom. *I do think that I simply don't want to do it (NS11MD:45).* The concept of free will is related to permission and the right to stay inactive, not to be involved.

Distrust in voluntary organizations

Distrust in voluntary organizations can be associated with incidents described in the media. The lack of trust in the voluntary sector is related to organizations where food, clothes, or any other tangible items are given. It seems that some kind of dishonesty exists

in every organization. Respondents have shown that is some level of tolerance for unfair behaviour, and that it's almost impossible to have total transparency in the organization. *There have been so many cases of misuse when someone received benefits for a long time. When people are not getting paid a lot, and they get a part of their salary into their pocket in cash, they will use every occasion to make some money. I'm sure there are some malignant ones, who will use every way possible, or holes in the system (NS10VD: 46).* There is a clear trend - organizations that provide food, and clothes tend to be associated with misuse of their assets most often.

Rumors play an important role when the reputation of organizations. *I've heard lots of rumors. I've heard that there are people, who are getting help, which doesn't belong to them. I do believe that regular volunteers are not getting any reward. The ones who benefit, are the ones who are at the top. <..>. I do think that people are not used to giving everything without taking something for themselves. They want to benefit from their activity. (NS7VD: 20).* Rumours are as important as the information in the media. They are accepted as equally reliable source of information, especially when it's spread directly from assumed witnesses. It's related to personal experience. Trust in the voluntary sector has been created through different periods of time and changes in the regimes. "Taking things for free" is an attribute of the generation. *I think that the generation, which had a habit of "combining", has to leave. All of us were used to taking benefits at work, and we are slowly moving to a state where we do not do that anymore (NS10VD: 48).* Unfortunately, the distrust is quite high among all the respondent groups.

Distribution of voluntary organizations

The geographical distribution of voluntary organizations is not equal around the country. The largest number of voluntary organizations is based in larger cities. There's a lack of understanding that some of the organizations, e.g. hotlines, are not attached to specific locations. The number of voluntary organizations is very limited in cities with up to 10.000 inhabitants. Smaller villages do have local organizations, mostly religion-related, which offer a very limited choice for action. *"But the situation is as follows that in peripheries people are getting older, there's a lack of initiatives and the number of habitants is decreasing. It's like a closed circuit. Still, there is a need, and we are talking about it during our meetings at the council (NS10VD: 30).* The uneven distribution of voluntary organizations plays a big role in lower levels of volunteers and unequal distribution throughout the country.

The other problem in smaller cities and villages is the physical reachability of organizations, as potential volunteers do not have the possibility to use a variety of transportation to reach the potential place of volunteering. The transportation system is not developed to meet their needs: *"There are five buses passing by the village during the day. It means that I have a very specific time when I can take the bus and I would need to lead and a very specific time when I return home. If there was a charity canteen nearby, I would really consider the possibility (NS15VP: 35)".* The voluntary organizations are often

understood as physical places where volunteering would be taking place: there is little distinction between organizations that offer physical help like providing food, clothes and those that focus on offering emotional help, like helplines. The promotion of voluntary organizations has been done in larger cities through organizations like libraries, using the funds of the EU, and the University of Third age. The issue with these instruments is that they only reach individuals in larger cities, with sufficient population to open these kinds of institutions.

Donations as an alternative to volunteering

Respondents have mentioned their financial support given to certain organizations through various series of events they organize. The best-known one is the collection of products for those in need in supermarkets, as well as TV shows for making donations. *You can help Maisto bankas, when they are doing their promotions. I do think that you can participate, and you provide help <..>It seems to me that it is easier for me to support something with money if they were in need of help. I do support and I do think that I'm helping in a way I can (NS10VD:40).* What is important to mention is that individuals choose to spend money rather than donate their time. *You just send an SMS and you've helped someone already. One or two euros. Your time is more expensive than money. I do believe that maybe that money will be put in better use rather than me going to do a worthless job (NS12MD:14).*

There is a lack of belief that the time spent volunteering is as much important as the donation. *"I'm more willing to believe in something I do myself. My company supports a lot of events, we share our profits. In this case, I do not sure how the money will be utilized. I'm not wasting the company's money for something that is not worth it. I do see real problems and I'm willing to help when I do know who will benefit from it. If we support any children shelter, there is serious doubt about where this money will go (NS7VD: 18).* Providing financial help rather than getting involved in voluntary activities brings a desire or hope that the funds are used for the right reasons, there is a certain level of transparency.

Age

As a reason for non-volunteering was mentioned in both categories of individuals – pensioners and working individuals. Working respondents highlighted that they focus on their work responsibilities, and that volunteering might be an activity for other age groups – young people, students, or retired individuals, who have spare time to get involved in voluntary activities. *I'm busy with responsibilities at work, which requires a lot of my effort. I have responsibilities at home, so I think that it is not an activity for a person of my age. (NS7VD: 40).* Employed volunteers in most cases combine their age and lack of time together as one reason. *I'm working very hard and I am nearly retirement age. Volunteering is for someone who has more energy and time (NS13:WD 12).* There is a clear trend showing that volunteering is understood as an activity suitable for younger people. *I do believe that I'm too old for that. I'm happy to see how young people help*

others. (NS1WP: 20). *I think that the age of 70 is not the time to volunteer. I think that it's for younger ones, who are full of energy. Not old ladies like me (NS19MP: 27). I do think that volunteering is for young people, who are willing to learn, to travel the world.*

Retired respondents see their lack of physical strength as an obstacle and reason for them to get involved. They associate volunteering with an activity that requires them to go somewhere, to do something, which demands a lot of physical strength. *If I went to Maisto bankas, how could I be useful? I'm too weak to do a lot of physical work. I would interfere more than would be helpful. (NS21MP: 15). I don't know how could I be helpful, as I'm retired already. I don't know organizations, which would be interested to take an old person like me. (NS30: MP).*

It is seen among retired respondents that they do not see themselves as potential active participants in particular activities due to their age. *I'm too old. I do believe that if I were much younger (age 60). Now it's time for me to look after my flower garden. (NS12MP: 36).* When talking about age, respondents do not believe that volunteering is an activity appropriate for their age.

Time

The factor, which has been mentioned by all of the respondents despite their status was the time and lack of it. *The other thing is, we're probably so involved in our jobs, and family matters, and we have grandchildren. There are not a lot of people who would come up with an idea about it. (NS11MD: 53).* In regards to occupational status, the most common answer regarding the lack of time was related to working overtime, and having little free time with friends and family. *"The reason I do not participate in voluntary activities is lack of time. I have lots of responsibilities after work (NS9MD: 40). So far, I don't feel any desire at all to get involved in such activities because I'm busy more than enough with my activities. I'm still working, it's not much of a time when work matters (NS10VD: 56).* Lack of choice when and how often to volunteer puts off individuals from even considering the possibility to volunteer. The lack of time is a common reason found in research when the reasons for not joining voluntary organizations are discussed.

Discussion and conclusion

Although research in volunteer motivation receives a lot of attention, the knowledge of the factors, which prevent individuals from volunteering is incomplete. The existing literature lacks knowledge about the specific reasons, which are related to the influence of regimes and how they affect an individual's unwillingness to become a member of voluntary organizations. European Values Study, completed in 2011 demonstrates variation in volunteering rates in countries with different political development. Halman (2003) states that democratic history is an important factors when volunteering rates are discussed. The paper focused on experience with compulsory volunteering, and how it affects the understanding of volunteering, and its purpose of it. The primary goal of this research was

to provide the explanation why there are existing differences in number of older volunteer in a Post Soviet country and among Western countries. The number of older volunteers in Western Europe, United States of America, Australia are higher when compared with former countries, which have experienced Soviet regime. Free will volunteerism did not exist under communist rule and the widely practiced compulsory participation in state organized charitable activities, involuntary voluntarism, created aversion, distrust and resistance (Kaufman, Mirsky & Avgar, 2003).

The results suggest that lack of tradition of taking an initiative, no understanding about the concept of volunteering, the experience of compulsory activities discourage individuals to join voluntary organizations. The second half of reasons, which keeps individuals away from voluntary organizations are related with the distrust in organizations, their transparency. The issue is related with the experience of living under Soviet regime, where the exchanges of goods, corruption was dominated in the society. The dominance of these factors is such that individuals there perceive that such systems cannot be changed (Stepanenko, 2006). Individuals partially relate their unwillingness to volunteer to the Soviet regime experience, as it has been a substantial part of their life. The changes in regimes have changed the point of view of volunteering and the voluntary sector. The unwillingness to volunteer due to the Soviet experience is related to freedom of choice, and it provides an option to make a choice. Negative experiences like memories of oppression and disrespect for an individual are still alive, and the lack of trust in society is widely spread. The development of the voluntary sector and its popularity are influenced by the spread and variety of organizations and distribution of organizations around the country.

The findings open questions for further studies as it has not been researched what factors would change people's unwillingness to volunteer and encourage them to consider volunteering. As attitudes towards volunteering have been changing over the last 30 years, voluntary organizations could benefit from the research when looking for ways to attract and retain members, if they knew how the mindset regarding volunteering could be changed.

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