



The Development of Volunteering in Post-Communist Societies. A Review

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Abstract. This paper focuses on the development of volunteering at aggregate level in the post-communist societies, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. Volunteering as a formal activity performed for organizations or associations is an older activity in Western Europe, but in Central and Eastern Europe it has been a new phenomenon after the collapse of the communist regime. During the communist rule, volunteering was compulsory for children and for adults as well. In this period, not only the voluntary activities were under state control but also the civil society, which is the seed-bed of volunteering. After the collapse of the communist regime, volunteering in Central and Eastern Europe decreased. The main reasons of this are the bad experiences in communism. In the transition in Central and Eastern Europe, the culture of volunteering in some countries is better developed, such as in the Czech Republic, while in others less developed, such as in Romania or Bulgaria. At aggregate level, the main determinants of volunteering are democracy, value change, secularization, and individualization. All these processes have occurred in Western Europe, while in Central and Eastern Europe are just in progress. Besides the communist experiences, that is why volunteering in Central and Eastern Europe is less developed.

Keywords: volunteering, post-communist societies, modernization

Introduction

Nowadays, volunteering is a widespread activity and it is interpreted from many perspectives. The definition of the term depends on cultural and social backgrounds. In the special literature, there are a variety of definitions about volunteering. For example, Juknevičius (2003) considers volunteering an unpaid activity for the benefit of others. The volunteer offers time or energy or money, and in exchange receives moral satisfaction (Juknevičius 2003). Others (Shead 1995, Voicu and Voicu 2009) consider volunteering as a formal activity within an organization.

In this paper, my goal is to present – based on special literature – a theoretical background regarding the development of volunteering in post-communist societies, focusing on Central and Eastern European post-transition countries. First, I will present some definitions about volunteering and its motivation and how modernization influenced the development of volunteering in general. During the processes of modernization, democracy, cultural changes, secularization, individualization influenced volunteering tendencies. Then I will present volunteering in postmodern societies. In Putnam's (2000) interpretation, it seems to be a declination of volunteering in postmodern societies, while Inglehart (2003) considers that volunteering is not declining, just transforming into new types.

In the next part, there is briefly presented how the communist leaders interpreted volunteering. During the communist rule, volunteering was compulsory for every citizen and it was made for the benefit of the state. After the collapse of the communist regime, during the transition, the volunteering as a free choice appeared as a new phenomenon in Central and Eastern Europe. At first, volunteering was surrounded by social prejudices, but over time volunteering started to be a common activity driven by either external or internal motivations. Finally, I will present the differences between Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe related to volunteering tendencies. In spite of the modernization processes and measures, volunteering in Central and Eastern Europe is less developed than in Western Europe.

The definition of volunteering

Volunteering is a complex term with a variety of meanings which depend on cultural and social backgrounds. Different authors use and emphasize different characteristics of volunteer activity (Voicu and Voicu 2009). In Juknevičius' (2003) definition, volunteering is an unpaid activity for the benefit of others or that of the environment. The volunteer offers his/her time, intellectual or physical energy, or money, etc. In exchange for this, he/she receives moral satisfaction, the approval of others, and the hope of eternal life. The volunteers are not forced to be members of the voluntary associations; they can start or close their activities whenever they wish (Juknevičius 2003).

After Wuthnow (1991), the main character of the volunteer is the altruistic attitude, meanwhile others emphasize the un-altruistic character of volunteering. Tilly and Tilly (1994) stress that volunteering is uncommodified, while other authors consider it commodified. Wilson and Musick (1997) consider informal helping a sort of a voluntary activity, but after Shead (1995) volunteering is a formal activity. Voicu and Voicu (2009) consider volunteering “as a formal, non-altruistic, and uncommodified activity” (Voicu and Voicu 2009: 541). They “define

volunteering as an activity through which individuals spend part of their time, without any wage, by free choice, in a formal way, within an organization, working for the benefit of others or of the entire community” (Voicu and Voicu 2009: 541).

Others consider that volunteering is not a simply giving of time for somebody or for a purpose but also a cultural and economic phenomenon which is part of the organizational mechanism of a society and shows the sharing of the social responsibilities and the level of engagement and participation expected from the citizens (Anheier and Salamon 2001).

In this paper, volunteering is interpreted as a formal activity in institutional backgrounds.

Fényes and Kiss (2011) resume well all the definitions and characteristics of volunteering in four attributes:

1. Volunteering is a free-of-charge work and paid work is excluded. On the other hand, it is possible to financially support the voluntary organizations or to reimburse for the volunteer the professional costs emerged in the volunteer activity. These costs are such as meals, travel costs, or symbolic prizes. The definition does not include work based on individual initiative and made for the common good or work based on mutual help with relatives, friends, or neighbours.

2. Volunteer work means producing material, intellectual goods or services for the benefit of others (individuals, groups, or communities), respectively for the public good and for specific cases. In this case, hobbies, amateur engagements, sports, and games are excluded from volunteering (Fényes and Kiss 2011). Generally, volunteering is a helping activity which is highly needed with the decline of the traditional civic community based on solidarity, reciprocity, and community support. However, helping within the family or the relatives cannot be included in this category.

3. Volunteering is a non-obligatory activity, carried out by people’s own choice and out of free will; thus, any obligatory voluntary work (e.g. in the communist organizations) cannot be regarded as voluntary work.

4. The volunteering motivation is intrinsic (subjective, value-oriented) and/or extrinsic (instrumental, but not directly material). It is not a purely altruistic pro-social activity and it can also be beneficial for the individual, too (Fényes and Kiss 2011).

There appeared many types of volunteering, which are based on different motivational issues. There are three types of volunteering: traditional (or old type), modern (or new type), and mixed volunteering. The traditional volunteer is motivated by helping others and is characterized by altruistic values. The new type of volunteering relies on motivations related to career development, personal growth, useful leisure activity, work experience, and professional improvement, and it is typical of young people (Fényes and Pusztai 2012).

Modernization and volunteering

Nowadays, several voluntary-related researches focus on volunteering as an organizational work. In the wake of modernization and globalization, it seems that a new type of volunteering has appeared, which takes place in organizations and associations called voluntary organizations. Inglehart (2003) contends that membership and volunteering go together.

Voluntary organizations are regarded as bridges between the citizens and the state. In this sense, individuals acquire social and civic skills and habits such as collaboration, feelings of responsibility and solidarity, shared goals, and public spiritedness (Halman 2003). After Newton (1999), voluntary organizations also teach people trust, moderation, compromise, reciprocity, which constitute the civic virtue. Through volunteering, people also develop their skills of democratic discussion and organization (Newton 1999). At aggregate level, volunteering reduces the deviant behaviour, such as drug use, criminal activity, teenage pregnancy, etc., and increases the democratic and economic development (Halman 2003).

It is certain that volunteering is related to democratic regime. The democracy as the best political system is the seed-bed of civil society, but it is also true that the strong civil society is the key for the maintenance of democracy. To achieve this, it is important that citizens not only take part as voters but are also present in civic, political, and organizational tasks (Halman 2003). This has made possible the appearance in the modern society of three types of volunteering: volunteering in “green” associations, welfare- and healthcare-related organizations; volunteering for political and interest organizations; volunteering in religious organizations (Inglehart 2003). Halman (2003) claims that one of the main cogwheels of a society to become and remain democratic is the participation of individuals in voluntary organizations (Halman 2003). In other words, civil society is a transition to democracy, which strengthens the democratic consolidation and develops various accomplishments of established democracies (Paturyan and Gevorgyan 2014).

Another result of modernization is the change of values, which affects volunteering as well. Inglehart (2000, 2003) examined how the shift of values shaped volunteering. After the author, modernization gives rise to two distinct dimensions of cultural change. The first change is typical in industrial societies, where the traditional values changed to secular-rational values. This change brings a lower rate of civic activism. The second change is typical of the knowledge societies, where the survival values changed to self-expression values, which are conducive to a higher level of civic participation, especially volunteering (Inglehart 2003).

For the societies cherishing traditional values, the parent–child ties, the deference to authority, the absolute moral, the sexual standards, and the traditional family values are important; they reject divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide, have high levels of national pride, and a nationalistic outlook.

Societies with secular-rational values have the opposite preferences. Societies with high levels of survival values are characterized by material values, the low rate of subjective well-being, relatively poor health, intolerance toward outgroups, low interpersonal trust, and rejection of gender equality. These societies also emphasize hard work. Societies with a high level of self-expression values have the opposite opinion about the above-mentioned. In these societies, there are high rates of participation in all three types of volunteering. People do not only express themselves but are also civically active (Inglehart 2003).

The history of communist rule also had a lasting impact on the value system. In the course of history, 25 societies experienced communist rule for periods ranging from 40 to 74 years. In these societies, there is a high level of secularization and a low level of self-expression values (Inglehart 2003).

Summarizing the foregoing, the entire historical heritage is reflecting on a society's value system, including religious heritage, colonial ties, the level of economic development, and the experience of communist rule (Inglehart 2003). However, the changing of the value system is reflected on the voluntary trends and the dynamics of a society.

Other characteristics of modernization, such as individualization and secularization, also had an impact on volunteering. With the appearance of individualization and secularization, the motivation and the patterns of volunteering changed from traditional to modern, from collectivistic to individualistic, from membership-based to programme-based. While the traditional volunteering was lifelong and demanded commitment, the new, modern volunteering is temporary and has a non-committal bases. Nowadays, volunteering is more based on personal interest and needs than on serving the community. Today, the volunteers do not take so much care for older or disabled people but are interested in 'trendy' problems such as refugees, human rights, animal rights, and other modern issues (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003).

The value change tendencies created by Inglehart (2000, 2003) are valid for the post-communist countries as well. The Eastern European countries were agrarian societies, where before the communist rule traditional values changed into secular-rational values. After the collapse of the communist regime, there occurred the more or less transition from survival to self-expression values. In the post-communist area, the process took place at various speeds. There are countries where the modernization was performed successfully, but there are countries where it is still in process. It is the same with the development of the democratic infrastructure. The transition in Eastern Europe is slow because it is initiated externally and it is not an intrinsic one. Western Europe tries to develop this area in all kinds of ways, e.g. the European Union, sorts of foundations, financial institutions such as the World Bank, etc. In a modern and democratic society, people have the chance to express their preferences, to satisfy their needs,

and to get involved in social life (Halman 2003). For people from the post-socialist bloc, this was a new kind of opportunity, which they had to learn how to use.

Finally, yet another factor is necessary for modernization: the international migration. There are social scientists (e.g. Aleksynska 2011, Voicu 2014) who examined the effects of migration on civil participation. Aleksynska (2011) has shown that immigrants are active in the life of their hosting society, but there are also differences between the immigrant groups. The propensity of the immigrants to volunteering is influenced by the level of development of the country of origin as well as by their culture of origin. Immigrants from developed and non-Muslim societies are more likely to volunteer in the hosting society. However, the background of immigrants can facilitate or hinder their civic involvement (Aleksynska 2011). Another determinant of civil participation besides the original culture is the host society's culture. Voicu assumes that "the strength of its average effect on individual propensity to become a member in associations is two or three times stronger as compared to the culture of origin" (Voicu 2014: 631). If somebody has been for a long time in the host society, then the social norms and institutions help him/her to adopt the local participative patterns (Voicu 2014). This way, international migrants returning to their society of origin will bring along a new cultural participation, which assumes a higher level of participation in associations. Otherwise the returning international migrants can influence positively the civil participation, including volunteering in the society of origin. Based on Goodman and Hiskey (2008), globalization made possible for migrants to maintain a strong bond with the sending communities, which are now called transnational communities. In these kinds of communities, the migrant's involvement in the local civil society is higher and is accepted by the community (Goodman and Hiskey 2008). In sum, the social experiences of migration may increase the propensity to volunteering in societies of origin, where the volunteering is at a low level such as in Central and Eastern Europe.

Volunteering in postmodern societies

Volunteering, more exactly the organizational volunteering in the so-called developed societies (e.g. America, Western Europe) is an older activity than in other societies such as post-communist countries. From the developed societies came the tendency to help the disadvantaged countries with material goods or with human help in difficult situations such as natural disasters, wars and social conflicts, diseases or famine. Over time, the development of volunteering in these countries has made a long way.

Putnam (2000) is the first social scientist who claimed that the civic participation in the United States has declined. In his view, some of the reasons of this decline in post-industrial societies are, for example, the increase of time spent in commuting

and watching television or the increase of female participation in the work force. In other words, in post-industrial societies, participation rate is lower than in other countries (Putnam 2000). The highest decline is among young cohorts, what could be explained with two reasons: (1) the impact of the life cycle: youth do not prefer volunteering as much as old cohorts do or (2) there is a generational change: the youth are less able to volunteer when they get older (Putnam 2000).

Putnam's (2000) most important attribute is that the decline of civic participation in the United States is a generational change, which means that the younger generation's civic engagement is lower than that of the older generation's. Inglehart (2003) considers that volunteering has not decreased, only traditional volunteering is less, but the new type of volunteering is more frequent among youth, such as volunteering in more flexible organizations, e.g. sports organizations.

The general view is that economic development brings the rise of volunteering, but Putnam's (2000) finding contradicts this expectation. Inglehart (2003) suggests that the decline of direct participation tends to be linked with the rise of the industrial society. Industrialization brings secondary associations, which have many members on paper, but in practice just a few are active. In other words, the appearance of post-industrial society brings urban sprawl, longer commuting time, two-career families, electronic communications, etc. Those listed below cut the time and energy available for civic activities. In the light of these, economic development is not raising the rates of civic participation but is hindering it and bringing long-term intergenerational cultural changes (Inglehart 2003).

Putnam (2000) found in his research that the major feature of the decline in civic activism is intergenerational nature, which means that the younger birth cohorts show lower rates of participation than older birth cohorts. The question which Inglehart (2003) puts is as follows: "Is this a uniquely American phenomenon, or something found across advanced industrial societies?" (Inglehart 2003: 60).

Inglehart (2003) and his colleagues examined data from 17 rich countries and 31 developing and ex-communist countries. They came to the followings: younger people show lower rates of membership and participation in various types of voluntary associations than the older fellows, but also the young show higher rates of membership and volunteering than the old. So, it is not so easy to find the reason of the decline of civic activism (Inglehart 2003).

Inglehart (2003) found that young people are more active in youth and sports organizations than the old people. In rich countries, the young are less likely to be members of other types of associations. In developing societies, the young are more likely to be members of everything except social welfare and other voluntary associations than older people. This result shows that the phenomenon may be linked with economic development. But when Inglehart (2003) and his colleagues examined the volunteering, they found that the young are more likely to do unpaid work. In less developed societies, the younger cohorts are likelier

than the old to be members of any kind of association, and likelier to do volunteer work in all types of association. This pattern shows that intergenerational shift in rich countries seems to be applicable (Inglehart 2003). The most popular volunteer organizations in the 50 examined societies are religious, church organizations with 12 percent, sports, recreational associations with 8 percent, and with 7 percent are social welfare organizations for the old, the handicapped, the deprived as well as education, arts, music, and cultural organizations. Less popular volunteer organizations include peace movements, Third World Development, and human rights groups with 2 percent (Inglehart 2003).

At the level of the 50 societies, there are three types of volunteering associated with three underlining dimensions. The first type is volunteering in environmental associations, peace movements, welfare activities for the old, the handicapped or the deprived, volunteering in health-care, and developing poor countries' activities. In certain countries, this is the dominant type of volunteering. It is quite the opposite in ex-communist societies, where volunteering rates fell with the end of communist rule. Summarizing the results of Inglehart (2003), on this type of volunteering, the most powerful impact has the percentage employed in agriculture and the society's score on Survival/Self-Expression values (Inglehart 2003).

The second dimension is related to volunteering for political parties, local organizations concerned with poverty and unemployment, women's groups, and labour unions. This dimension is highly present in communist countries such as China and Vietnam, in agrarian societies such as Uganda or the Philippines, and in advanced industrial societies too such as the US and Sweden. In post-industrial societies, Self-Expression values are higher and there is a high employee rate in the service sector. One aspect of these, employment in the service sector, reduces volunteering in this type of volunteering, but Self-Expression values increase volunteering in this kind of groups (Inglehart 2003).

The third type involves volunteering in religious or church-linked organizations, youth work, sports groups, educational and cultural associations. This dimension is characteristic of US and three African countries (Zimbabwe, Uganda, and South Africa). Inglehart (2003) found that cultural change has a strong impact on this type of volunteering; the transition from Traditional to Secular-Rational values is linked with declining rates of participation in these groups. On the other hand, the shift from Survival to Self-Expression values is raising participation (Inglehart 2003).

The level of volunteering is not equal in Western Europe too. The general tendency is that volunteering decreases from north to south and from east to west. The highest level of volunteering is in Sweden and the Netherlands, while in Italy and Spain it is the lowest (Voicu and Voicu 2009).

At the individual level, volunteering depends on education, religious practice, social network, income, and age. In other words, people with a dominant status

volunteer more. At aggregate level, the level of development, widely trusted and better-educated citizens influence the level of volunteering. In sum, volunteering depends on culture and resources (Voicu and Voicu 2009).

With the appearance of individualization, people became disconnected from family, friends, neighbours, and social groups, and grew more interested in personal realizations such as developing a lucrative career, personal happiness, having success and achievements, meanwhile neglecting public interests. Among the consequences, there are increased crime rates, marital breakdown, drug abuse, suicide, tax evasion, etc. (Halman 2003).

After Putnam (2000), four factors are responsible for the erosion of social capital, which also explain the decline of voluntary activities:

1. The increased pressure of time and money – people are so occupied with their work that they are unable to get involved in civil activities like volunteering.
2. Increased mobility. Americans move so often that it is difficult for them to get acquainted with their neighbours and to engage in voluntary activities.
3. Traditional family – the carrier of social capital is on decline, which appears from the increase in marital breakups and the decline in the number of children.
4. The impact of technology and mass media. People's scarce free time is increasingly devoted to watching TV and the need for direct personal contacts is reduced (Putnam 2000, 246).

Increased mobility, time pressure, and the impact of technology decreases the inclination of people to be involved in voluntary activities (Halman 2003).

According to Putnam's (2003) research results in America, volunteering in churches and clubs had declined, while the volunteering in charity and social services had risen. For this, the explanation is the age of volunteers, because the older generation had appeared among the volunteers. This is possible because this generation was "socialized in a time when civic values were highly valued" (Halman 2003, 185).

In post-communist countries, volunteering for organizations or associations is not so common. The reason is the bad experience from the communist rule. In this period, the civil society was under state control and volunteering was compulsory, even not complying with it being sanctioned. However, while civil society was under state control, there were some independent organizations too, which were against the communist regime.

With the collapse of the communism, organizational networks (controlled by the state) ceased, too. There was no state to protest. In the transition period, the infrastructure of the NGOs could not develop as well as it was expected. For example, in Romania, there did not emerge any detailed law about voluntary work. Not only people do not recognize the benefits of volunteering to their life but organizations and associations also share this deficiency.

Volunteering in Central and Eastern Europe

The concept of volunteering in the transition became out-of-date in Central and Eastern Europe because of the requirements demanded by the communist state concerning the free time and effort contribution for some common social, cultural, and political causes (Anheier and Salamon 2001). The development of the civil society in the 1990s was a new phenomenon just as democracy.

The main condition of the development of democracy is the network of voluntary associations. Civil society does not exist without voluntary associations. The civil society's essential character is the civil participation of the citizens in public life (Juknevičius 2003). In Eastern Europe, during the communist rule, not only the political sphere was under total control of the Communist Party but also the social sphere and welfare development (Rimac and Zrinščak 2010).

There are two kinds of concepts about the changes in post-communist countries. The first is linked with the name of Marius Povalis Šaulauskas. Šaulauskas (1998) had distinguished four orientations of social change in post-communist societies:

1. Restitutive: orientation to the restoration of old, non-existent social structures and institutions;
2. Imitative: orientation to the creation of social structures and institutions that originated in different social environments;
3. Continuative: orientation to the development and modification of the existing social structures and institutions;
4. Innovative: orientation to the autonomous creation of distinct and qualitatively new social structures and institutions (Juknevičius 2003: 127–128).

The second concept is related to Rimac and Zrinščak (2010). On the one hand, they consider that the post-communist societies – in spite of having changed the formal procedures – did not change their behaviours and values significantly. On the other hand, the social costs of the transitions were high and had a significant effect on people's social relations and values (Rimac and Zrinščak 2010).

In post-communist societies, the development of civil society came off in two steps. In the first step, which is called the revolutionary period, development was very fast and it was guided by the restitutive and imitative orientation. In the second period, called evolutionary, the rhythm of development was reduced and the continuative and innovative orientations were stressful. This approach can be applied to voluntary activities, too (Juknevičius 2003).

Juknevičius (2003) emphasizes Karl Marx's (1975) definition about the division of labour. The individual is subordinate to the division of labour and labour is life's principal need. In 1961, the theory of Marx (1975) about communism was applied to the programme of communism builders. Marx's aim was to change the labour concept from a disagreeable duty into a source of pleasure (Juknevičius 2003).

The communist rule in all of Eastern Europe stemmed from Soviet Russia. So, whatever happened there affected Central and Eastern European countries, too. Volunteering in Soviet Russia was characterized by the followings:

1. Red Saturdays (*subbotniks*): Vladimir Lenin was the first leader of Soviet Russia, who tried to put all of Marx's theories into practice. Lenin introduced Red Saturdays, when all Soviet citizens worked in their workplace for free and students did some charity work. Red Saturday was held once in a year, a Saturday close to Lenin's birthday. It was emphasized that these actions brought economic gain, and not the feeling of achievement, which is important in any voluntary action.

2. Voluntary works in trade unions: after the Civil War, the number of military-related voluntary organizations increased together with the rate of sports and cultural organizations. Lenin called them trade unions. The participation in these organizations responded to social integration.

3. All voluntary activities involved children and adults, too. Children had to assist the lonely, the elderly, and the disabled. Volunteering strengthened unselfishness, sacrifice in youth.

4. Voluntary work was totally under state control. Volunteering was compulsory, it was called 'compulsory volunteering'. That kind of volunteering was the *subbotniks*, which was not an individual choice. It is not accidental that after the collapse of the state pressure, Red Saturdays disappeared and the importance of volunteering suddenly fell (Juknevičius 2003).

The theory of Rimac and Zrinščak (2010) contends that the modernization intention of the communist state resulted in clear boundaries between public and private life, between bourgeois and the working class, named dual social order. In this period, civil society did not exist and connections across the society were extremely limited. The dual social order generated a strong division between "us" and "them", and as a result the practice of solidarity and social sensitivity was manifested only in closely related social groups (Rimac and Zrinščak 2010). In this social situation, voluntary activities had no place.

The whole actions succeeded by the communist rule led to the distrust of people in voluntary work and organizations. In the first part of the transition, the establishment of the NGOs was realized on external initiatives (e.g. World Bank). In the second part of the transition period, these external sponsors left, and the civil society could not organize itself. The associations established after the regime change fell. They exist only on papers, but only just a few of them are active.

The dynamics of volunteering in post-communist countries

Volunteering has changed significantly after the fall of totalitarianism. In the socialist society, two types of voluntary associations existed: truly voluntary and quasi-voluntary associations. The truly voluntary organizations were the opposite of the system: this kind of organizations included, for example, religious associations, underground political circles, or green movements. Quasi-voluntary associations were completely controlled by the state. These were, for example, professional associations like Young Pioneers or the Young Communist League (Juknevičius 2003).

After the communist rules collapsed, truly voluntary associations started to disappear because there was no state to be opposed to, while the quasi-voluntary associations disappeared because they had lost the control of the state (Juknevičius 2003).

In the new situation, there are three basic scenarios of the development of voluntarism in post-communist countries:

1. In the countries incorporated into the Soviet Union, influenced by Marxism, volunteering was firstly created by the old ideology and the continuative orientation was weakening. After these statements, volunteering in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia should decrease more significantly than in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Bulgaria.

2. Volunteering has a large influence on the population's capacity to build new political regimes and on their operation under democracy and their cooperation for the development of public good. Post-communist countries in 1998 were divided into two groups: Poland, Estonia, Slovenia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic composed the first group. In these countries, reforms were carried out rapidly. Here, volunteering should have fallen less significantly. The second group was composed by Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania. In these countries, democratic reforms were not introduced so easily, and thus voluntary actions should have a significant decrease.

3. Neither the influence of Marxist ideology nor the speed of political and economic changes had a dynamic impact on the development of civil society, including volunteering (Juknevičius 2003).

In the 21st century, there also are problems with the development of the civil society. In many respects, people could not get over the communist experience. They still have problems with trust, free work evokes bad memories in them and they consider it a waste of time, at least in Romania.

Voluntary organizations in post-communist countries can be classified into six categories:

1. Welfare organizations (including social services for the elderly, the handicapped, or disadvantaged people and organizations concerned with health, poverty, employment, housing, and racial equality);
2. Religious or church organizations;
3. Trade unions and professional associations;
4. Political parties and movements;
5. Interest groups (youth clubs and movements, sport or recreation, education and cultural activities, women's groups);
6. Ideology-based movements (third-world development, human rights, ecology, animal rights, and peace movements) (Juknevičius 2003).

Trade unions had ceased after the decline of the communist regime. The number of working people for trade unions declined in post-Soviet countries because under the communist regime membership in trade unions was compulsory, but these trade unions did not fulfil their part: the employees had no right to complain to employers or to strike. It is natural that in post-communist countries this type of trade unions broke up. The importance of religious organizations increased in the democratic milieu, except in Bulgaria and Poland. In fact, we can expect some decline in all countries after secularization. Welfare organizations under the communist regime were out of law in spite of the need for them. The state was declared as the main provider of all welfare facilities, but this has changed after 1990. The state was not able to answer all the needs of its citizens. In general, the civil sphere can solve the welfare problem if the state is weak, but in the case of post-communist countries there is a dilemma whether the civil society is consolidated enough to mobilize itself and take action for the welfare of citizens. It is the same case with the interest groups and ideology-based organizations. The exception is the Czech Republic, where this kind of voluntary actions have declined the least (Juknevičius 2003).

There are only two countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the Czech Republic and Hungary, where the democracy and the civil society is advanced, and the level of volunteering is rising, but the potential in this direction exists in all the post-communist countries (Juknevičius 2003).

The degree of volunteering participation of the individuals in a society depends on the opportunities available and the number of voluntary organizations. In Central and Eastern Europe, the voluntary sector is just in "an embryonic state" (Crawford 1996: 111). The economic development is the driving force for voluntary organizations because economic wealth increases individuals' opportunities to spend more time in different kinds of organizations (Halman 2003).

The other part of the reasons can be located in the character of the communist rule. Communist modernization was just a fantasy. The state just practised its power while individuals were suppressed. "For several decades, the state completely discouraged civic society and individual initiative" – the public space

was the place where the lies dominated. In this public space, public activities were characterized by the pretended attitudes and emotions. This kind of experience in post-communist countries “led to the rejection of public life and, implicitly, of volunteering as a way of acting on behalf of others”. Moreover, the meaning of volunteering was reinterpreted and falsified by the state. It was compulsory to participate in party rituals and do unpaid work as voluntary work for the state. The time of volunteering was controlled by the state (Voicu and Voicu 2009: 553).

As the result of the communist regime in Central-Eastern European countries, the rate of volunteering is very low. In Russia, it is the lowest, 8.8 per cent. The rate is somewhat higher in other Eastern Europe countries with an average of 16.2 per cent, while Romania’s rate is 15.7 per cent. It is curious that Poland (13.7%) and Hungary (14.8%) have lower rates of volunteering than Romania (Juknevičius 2003).

From the researches ran by Fényes and her colleagues (2015) in Hungary, it turns out that the new type of (or modern) volunteering is partially present among young people. The youth have mixed motivations for volunteering: besides the intention of helping, there appear motivations related to career development or the useful spending of leisure time. It is also true that the employers do not take voluntary experiences as much into account as it happens in Western European countries (Fényes 2015).

Differences between Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe

The difference between Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe was always evident. In Western countries, where the democracy is stable, the volunteering rate is much higher, while in newly established Eastern countries it is lower (Juknevičius 2003).

The changes after the communist rule had an important impact on all components of the social system. The most visible are the economic and political changes, but they depend on the changes of the social structure and social values. The differences between Eastern and Western Europe can be observed in the lack of participative values, mistrust in democracy and governments, less developed entrepreneurial values, self-responsibility, autonomy, and individual planning (Voicu and Voicu 2009).

There are two main approaches of the social scientists which aim at finding the reasons of why people get involved in voluntary activities. The first approach focuses on individual and local resources (income, social and human capital). The more resources an individual has, the more likely he/she is to volunteer.

According to the second approach, a volunteer is managed by his/her beliefs and values; in other words, the cultural dimension has an important impact on volunteer work. Membership in the communist area has a negative effect on the determination of volunteering. These countries developed a non-volunteering culture. Some of the reasons are the lack of democratic experience, the rural aspect of the whole area, and the patriarchal population. In this kind of societies, people used to solve their problems with face-to-face methods and not by civic participation in voluntary organizations (Voicu and Voicu, 2009).

In general, the main predictors of volunteering in the majority of the European countries are education, religious practice, social network, income, and age. People with a dominant status are able to volunteer more often. In ex-communist countries, in predicting the volunteering social capital, religious practice has a lower importance, while income is more important. This is relevant for Romania as well (Voicu and Voicu, 2009). In Western societies, volunteering is transcending national boundaries and is becoming an international phenomenon, while in Central and Eastern European countries these transnational phenomena are less common (Anheier and Salamon 2001). Among the students in universities, programmes like Erasmus or Erasmus+ are more and more popular, which increases international volunteering in Central and Eastern Europe, too. This fact confirms again how the level of education effects volunteering.

In Central and Eastern Europe, volunteering has social prejudices because of the communist experience. However, people who volunteer do not feel pride for their work. The fact that somebody works for free is not recognized socially or even by most of the employers.

The most voluntary actions took place after the European Union had declared the year 2011 the European Year of Volunteering. In Eastern Europe, this was the year until when the post-communist countries had been trying to develop volunteering in different ways. For example, in Hungary, the School Community Service for the students in high school was introduced or in Romania the 78/2014 Act of volunteering was renewed.

Another difference between Western and Eastern Europe is the existence of volunteer centres or local co-coordinating agencies. In France, Netherlands, or Germany, this kind of establishments exist, which inform citizens about volunteering opportunities or match volunteers with organizations that might need them (Anheier and Salamon 2001). In Central and Eastern Europe, this is not common. In most of the countries, just voluntary organizations had some kind of statements of their volunteers, but there were no central databases. In this way, citizens willing to volunteer and voluntary organizations could not work together appropriately.

Conclusions

Volunteering is an activity which is related to social life and is affected by democracy, welfare, economic development, and cultural changes. In general, volunteering means giving up on and overstepping egoism at the individual level, but if the ideological background changes it will have an impact on volunteering in a whole country (Juknevičius 2003). For this, the post-communist area is a very good example. The communist rule had a strong control on the civil society, which resulted in ‘compulsory volunteering’ called *subbotniks*. After the collapse of the communist regime, volunteering declined in these societies because of experiencing the deformed volunteering culture.

With the passage of time, the decline stopped. Voicu and Voicu (2009), analysing the data from the periods of 1990–1993 and 2005–2006, concluded that the rate of volunteering in post-communist societies is increasing. People started to get involved in voluntary activities for the sake of the other or the collectivity (Voicu and Voicu 2009). Volunteering in organizations is an ‘import’ from the Western European culture, but in spite of this the volunteering culture in Eastern Europe is different. Combining the post-communist culture with the Western culture, there appears a new value pattern with elements from both cultures, which influences the development of volunteering culture in Central and Eastern Europe. In some countries, the rate of volunteering is lower, like in Russia, but there are countries where the rate is high, like in the Czech Republic or Slovakia (Voicu and Voicu 2009, Juknevičius 2003).

Before the communist regime, in the inter-war period, volunteering was not a common activity either. In this period, the eastern societies were patriarchal societies, and the inhabitants were not involved in organizational activities (Voicu and Voicu 2003a). So, until 1989, volunteering had been a missing link in Central and Eastern Europe. Starting from the 2000s, volunteering still constitutes a new phenomenon and can still be interpreted, after Voicu and Voicu (2003b), as a “missing link on the road to European integration” (Voicu and Voicu 2003b: 15). Today, we can say that the culture of volunteering is in embryonic state because cohorts born in the late 1980s socialized in the transition period when the Western ‘introduced’ volunteering in Central and Eastern Europe. Today, these cohorts are able to volunteer (see Fényes 2015).

Taking into account that people with a better education, wealthier and young are more likely able to do voluntary work, the best solution to improve the level of volunteering in Eastern Europe would be focusing on young and better educated people because they are sensitive toward civil issues and are able to get involved in voluntary organizations. For them, one should show the advantages and the rewards of volunteering and advertise for them the volunteering opportunities (Voicu and Voicu 2009).

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