

## EXAMINATION OF CITIZENS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS PROVIDING SUPPORT TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND VOLUNTEERING DURING DISASTERS\*

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### Abstract

The subject of quantitative research is to examine the factors influencing citizens' attitudes towards assisting vulnerable people and volunteering during natural disasters. In this paper, the authors examine the relationship between gender, age, level of education, marital status, employment, income level and perception of personal religiosity, and the attitudes to assisting vulnerable people and volunteering. Multiple-point random sampling was used to survey 2500 citizens in the area of 19 local communities endangered by the consequences of natural disasters. The results of the survey show that 29% of respondents would provide assistance to vulnerable people in the form of money, 18,2% in the form of food and water, 21,6% in clothing and footwear, 23,3% would volunteer, while 4,6% would engage in shelter centers for endangered people. In addition, it was found that there was no statistically significant relationship between the attitudes towards providing assistance in the form of money and the employment status. As well as, attitudes about volunteering and provision of food and water assistance are not related to the employment status of respondents, etc. The results of the research can be used to improve the management system in natural disasters and to create appropriate educational programs for establishing a more efficient and comprehensive system of assistance to vulnerable people and the operation of volunteer organizations.

**Key words:** natural disasters, attitudes about helping, providing assistance, volunteering.

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## ИСПИТИВАЊЕ СТАВОВА ГРАЂАНА О ПРУЖАЊУ ПОМОЋИ УГРОЖЕНИМ ЉУДИМА И ВОЛОНТИРАЊУ ЗА ВРЕМЕ КАТАСТРОФА

### Апстракт

Предмет овог квантитативног истраживања представља испитивање фактора који утичу на формирање ставова грађана о пружању помоћи угроженим људима и волонтирању за време природних катастрофа. У раду аутори испитују повезаност пола, година старости, нивоа образовања, брачног статуса, запослености, висине прихода и перцепције личне религиозности са ставовима о пружању помоћи угроженим људима и волонтирању. Вишестепним случајним узорковањем анкетирано је 2500 грађана на подручју 19 локалних заједница угрожених последицама природних катастрофа. Резултати истраживања показују да би 29% испитаника пружило помоћ угроженим људима у виду новца, 18,2% у виду хране и воде, 21,6% у виду одеће и обуће, 23,3% би волонтирало, док би се 4,6% ангажовало у центрима за пријем угрожених људи. Поред тога, утврђено је да не постоји статистички значајна повезаност ставова о пружању помоћи у виду новца са статусом запослености. Такође, ставови о волонтерству и пружању помоћи у виду хране и воде нису повезани са статусом запослености испитаника итд. Резултати истраживања могу бити искоришћени за унапређење система управљања у природним катастрофама и стварање одговарајућих образовних програма за успостављање ефикаснијег и свеобухватнијег система пружања помоћи угроженим људима и рада волонтерских организација.

**Кључне речи:** природне катастрофе, ставови о помагању, пружање помоћи, волонтирање.

### INTRODUCTION

In the case of natural disasters, the initial response comes from first responders and as necessary from the relevant local authorities and possible volunteer organizations (Helsloot & Ruitenbergh, 2004; Mileti, 1999; Tierney, Lindell, & Perry, 2002; Tobin & Montz, 2004: 13). Volunteer activity in such situations is crucial, bearing in mind that most survivors are saved in the first 48 hours. Oloruntoba (2005) notes that without good strategic planning, where volunteers should be sent, how to organize, monitor and direct them, they can become a serious obstacle to the successful functioning of disaster management. American sociologist Stoddards used for the first time the term volunteer in his study on volunteers. He also emphasizes the difference between volunteers who are situational (coming to the scene and wanting to help) and those who have been trained (who have undergone appropriate training and possess certain equipment) (Britton, 1991; Stoddard, 1969: 188). Smith (1994) points out that volunteering involves a contribution that an individual gives without any coercion or compensation in order to make public benefit. It can also be viewed as a form of prosocial behavior that involves cooperation, help, sharing with others, giving, various forms

of psychosocial help, and so on (Brebrić, 2008; Trbojević, Otašević, & Mitrović, 2015: 228).

When it comes to motives for providing assistance, it has been found that its various forms are conditioned by various motives (Houle, Sagarin, & Kaplan, 2005; Otašević, Trbojević & Mitrović, 2015; Gazley & Brudney, 2005; Cvetković et al., 2015, Cvetković, 2016). Brand et al. (2008) identify three types of volunteer motivation: material benefits, gaining information; solidary benefits, group membership, social status, personal recognition; and purposive benefits, meeting organization goals. Whereby, there is egoistic (achieving one's own well-being) and altruistic motivations (welfare of others) for providing help. Also, positive correlation of empathy and volunteerism was confirmed (Gill & Andreychik, 2009; Miller, Eisenberg, Fabes, & Shell, 1996). Providing help is conditioned by social order, personal characteristics, attitudes and situational variables. High education (Cvetković, et al., 2016) and high household incomes are some of the most important predictors of volunteering, while sex and employment status are also positively correlated (Okun, 1993). Citizens are motivated to help due to altruistic and humanitarian attitudes, desire to better understand the situation and to raise the level of reputation and integration into the community (Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1996; Omoto & Snyder, 2002). On the other hand, Florin et al. (1986) note that citizens who live in their own proprietary facilities, the elderly, who have a longer residence and married ones, are more interested in volunteering (Florin, Jones, & Wandersman, 1986; Dolnicar & Randle, 2007). Such results can be explained by the existence of a sense of association with the community, feeling of having a home, etc. In Serbia, a high percentage of people declare themselves as a believer and practice traditional religious rituals such as baptism, celebration of patron saint and religious burial. According to official data, the dominant religion is Christianity, that is, Orthodoxy. According to the latest 2011 census, Orthodox believers make up about 85% of the population of Serbia (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia). Bigović and Bone (2011) show that a very high percentage of the population is declared as believers (93%), and that this percentage is somewhat higher among members of ethnic and religious minorities than among members of the majority population. It has been found that there is a correlation between the intensity of religious beliefs and traditional values, which can also be reflected in helping affected people in natural disasters. Kuburić (1999: 77) notes that religiosity can be defined as a subjective system of attitudes and a system of internal permanent dispositions that includes beliefs, knowledge, feelings and behavior. Marc and John (2008) found that just over half of Americans who attend church every or nearly every week have been engaged in volunteer work in the past twelve months. Religious people are more likely to volunteer even for secular causes (Son & Wilson, 2012).

Barriers to helping affected people by natural disasters are a very topical issue. Sundeen, Raskoff, and Garcia (2007) said that for public agencies, these are very important questions: who tends not to volunteer, why they do not volunteer, and whether significant socioeconomic status differences exist among them in their stated reasons for not participating. Johnson (2004) found that most important barriers to volunteering are time constraints, lack of benefits, and inadequate volunteer management. Points of Light Foundation (2000) found the following volunteering barriers: lack of time or financial resources, child care, transportation; low self-esteem or confidence in skills; negative perceptions of volunteering or of external volunteer organizations and cultural or language barriers. The results of one of the national studies show that the most common reason for not providing help is believing and expectation that first responders will help vulnerable people, as a result of divided responsibility. The following reasons are also highlighted: I do not have enough time to take such measures; I do not want to think about it; Too expensive; I think that taking such measures will not change anything; I do not think I am capable of such a thing (FEMA, 2009).

#### *LITERARY REVIEW*

Many researchers examine determinants of prosocial behaviors such as giving money, food and water, clothing and footwear, as well as the statistical numbers and percentage of people who would engage in helping behaviors (Musick, Rose, Dury, & Rose, 2015; Taniguchi & Marshall, 2014). One survey conducted in the United States showed that 23% of respondents would engage in providing help to vulnerable people, 34% would volunteer, and 22% would provide assistance to first responders if needed (FEMA, 2009: 12). Werritty et al. (2007) point out that citizens most often receive various forms of help by neighbors (55.8%), family members (53.3), friends (27.9%), local church (7%), while 10% of respondents said they did not get any help.

Providing help to affected people by natural disasters can be under the influence of various personal and environmental factors. For these reasons, the authors have chosen to examine the effects of gender, age, level of education, marital status, employment status, income levels and perceptions of personal religiousness on helping vulnerable people as relevant sociodemographic factors that can have an effect on ones attitude about helping behaviors. When it comes to effects of gender, Hackl, Halla, and Pruckner (2007) found that women and people living in a relationship are less likely to offer voluntary work and this could be explained by child care responsibilities and a higher engagement in informal help. The results of one national survey show that men have shown a greater degree of self-confidence in their ability to respond in the first five minutes after the disaster and, to a higher degree, are prepared to respond, and have shown greater

interest in volunteer activities (FEMA, 2009). Taniguchi (2006) noted that gender differences are significant because of their implications not only for the supply of volunteers but also for women's opportunities to get involved in local community. Many research found that women volunteer more than men (Brooks & Lewis, 2001). The results of some surveys show that men are more interested in helping vulnerable people (Curtis, Grabb, & Baer, 1992). On the other hand, there are also studies that confirm the greater interest of women (Ledić, 2007). Shelly & Polonsky (2002) found that the motivation for volunteering did not differ by gender or age. Weaker correlation and inconsistent results were found with the level of religiousness of citizens (Berger, 2006). It can be assumed that men due to divided social roles help more on the spot, while women help more in activities that involve contact with victims.

Observing influences of age on helping, researchers have found that there is a positive correlation, and that the most commonly involved are citizens aged 34 to 55 (Hodgkinson, 1986; Komp et al., 2012; Greenfield & Marks, 2004). It was also found that younger people volunteered less often, and older ones more often (Ledić, 2007). Meier (2006) found that motives for volunteering change over time as people get older they conceive volunteering as investment in their mental and physical health. The survey in the United States found that citizens aged 18 to 54 would most prefer to volunteer in relation to citizens over 55 (56%). In addition, citizens aged between 35 and 54 would be more likely to engage than citizens aged 18 to 34 (FEMA, 2009). Okun and Schultz (2003) found that rate of volunteering decreased with age (35-44 years - 67%; 75 years and older - 43%). On the other side, Willigen (2000) found that volunteering has a high effect on the life satisfaction of older citizens than younger ones. Also, a strong and consistent relationship between the provision of assistance to vulnerable people and the level of education has been found (McPherson & Rotolo, 1996). Sundeen (1992) points out in the results of his research that citizens with a higher level of education are more interested in providing help. It can be said that they have more positive attitudes about volunteering compared to citizens with lower levels of education (Ledić, 2007; Cvetković et al., 2015).

The results of previous studies show that married people more often provide help than citizens who are single (Hodgkinson, 1986; Palisi & Korn, 1989). In contrast, there are also studies that found that divorced citizens are more interested in providing help than married citizens (Ortega & Allen, 1986). Rossi (1990) found that married people may be more interesting in volunteer because the institution of marriage is accompanied by social expectations, they are active in the community and local organizations. Rotolo (2000) found that married people are more likely to participate in voluntary organizations and do volunteer work.

Son and Wilson (2012) note that the most consistent finding is that volunteers are more highly educated and more religious. Wilson (2000) confirms an insignificant influence of education on informal volunteering. Brown and Ferris (2007) found that education has a positive effect on various forms of volunteering such as unpaid political campaign work. Smith (1994) found that people who are college educated, middle-aged, white, middle class are more likely to volunteer than those who are not. Also, he found that volunteer participation increases with the number of children under 18 or even under fifteen in the household under 18 or even under fifteen. Curtis et al. (1992) found there is more participation in voluntary associations in smaller, rural communities.

The provision of assistance is also significantly influenced by the employment status (Curtis, Grabb, & Baer, 1992) and income level (Smith, 1994). When it comes to relationship between employment status and helping vulnerable people, there are inconsistencies in results. Namely, certain studies have found that employed citizens prefer volunteering (Edwards, Edwards, & Watts, 1984), while others have found that employment status does not affect the frequency of volunteering (Ledić, 2007). Hodgkinson et al. (1992) found that part-time workers participate more than either employed or unemployed persons. On the other side Curtis, Grabb, and Baer (1992) found that full-time-employed people are more likely to be volunteers. It can be assumed that citizens who are part time workers have more free time to devote themselves to volunteering, and on the other hand, citizens who are full-time-workers are involved in social activities. Rossi (2001) found that the number of hours of employment is quite commonly considered as a factor for volunteering. Besides that, Becker and Hofmeister (2000) found that the hours of employment have little effect on the hours of volunteering. In addition to the status of employment, some studies have found that citizens with higher incomes are more motivated to provide help (Auslander & Litwin, 1988). Richer citizens volunteer much more often because they are expected to be more productive than low income citizens (Buckley & Croson, 2006). Schady (2001) found a positive correlation between income and volunteering.

### *METHODS*

The subject of quantitative research is to examine the factors influencing citizens' attitudes to assisting vulnerable people and volunteering during natural disasters. In doing so, the authors decided to examine the relationship of certain personal and environmental factors such as gender, age, level of education, marital status, employment, income level and perceptions of personal religiosity, and the attitudes to assisting vulnerable people and volunteering during natural disasters. The aim of the conducted research is reflected in the scientific description, that is, the systematization of

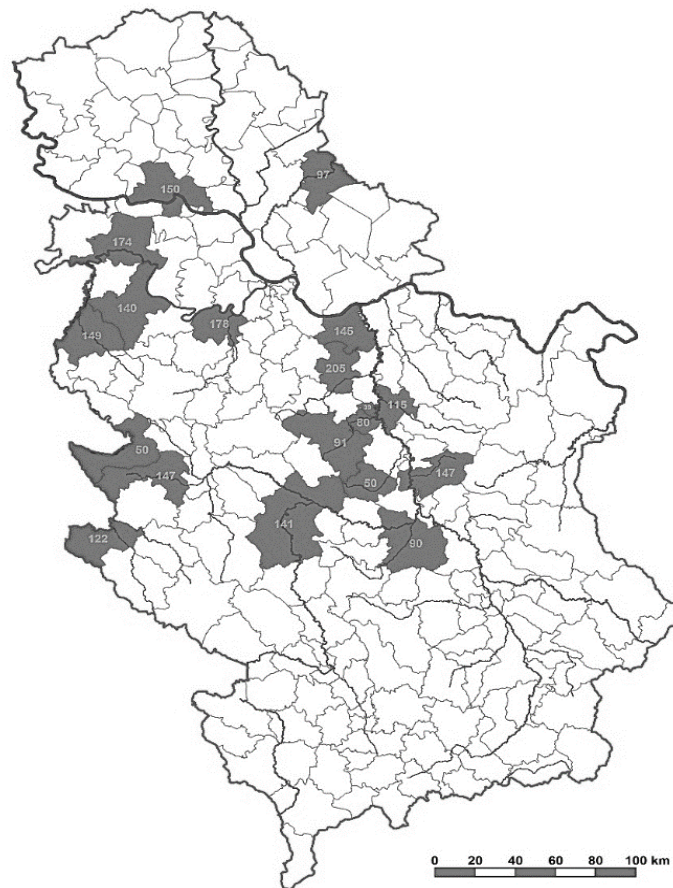
existing knowledge on providing assistance to vulnerable people and volunteering during natural disasters, improving the existing empirical structure, comparing the results achieved with the results of previous research, and conceiving future research on this topic. The survey questionnaire used in the research process contained general and special parts. In the general part, the respondents were asked questions about their demographic and socio-economic characteristics. The special part of the questionnaire contained the following questions:

- Would you pay money to some of accounts for helping the flood victims?
- Would you provide help in the form of food and water to vulnerable people?
- Would you provide help in the form of clothing and footwear to vulnerable people?
- Would you engage in providing assistance to victims of flooding in the field (rescue, evacuation, first aid, food and water delivery, etc.)?
- Would you engage in protecting material goods from flooding in the field (loading sandbags, building dams, etc.)?
- Would you as a volunteer participate in the elimination of flood consequences?
- Would you engage in some of shelter centers for vulnerable people?

For the purposes of the research, using the statistical method and the method of experiential generalization, local communities in Serbia affected by the consequences of floods were stratified. This provided the stratum, that is, the population made by all adult inhabitants of the local population. From this stratum, the random sample method selected 19 out of a total of 154 in which the threat or potential threat of flooding is indicated. The survey covers the following local communities: Obrenovac (178), Šabac (140), Kruševac (180), Kragujevac (191), Sremska Mitrovica (174), Priboj (122), Batočina (80), Svilajnac (115), Lapovo (39), Paracin (147), Smederevska Palanka (205), Sečanj (97), Loznica (149), Bajina Bašta (50), Smederevo (145), Novi Sad (150), Kraljevo (141), Rekovac and Užice (147) (Figure 1).

In the subsequent sampling procedure, a multi-stage random sample was used. The first stage identified parts in the administrative seats of local communities that have been endangered by 100-year floods or potential high-water risk. The second stage identified streets or parts of streets, and the third stage identified the households in which the survey would be conducted. The number of households is in line with the number of communities. The fourth stage of sampling was related to the procedure for selecting respondents within a previously defined household. The selection of respondents was carried out by the random selection procedure of adult household members who were present at the time of the survey. The survey included a total of 2500 citizens. Prior to the survey, a pilot survey was conducted on a sample of 50 citizens from Batočina, to determine the

validity of the instrument. The research is part of a more extensive multi-methodical research on citizen preparedness for responding to natural disasters.



*Figure 1. Overview map of geospatial distribution of respondents by local communities in the Republic of Serbia. Source: authors.*

Regarding the representativeness of the sample, men are represented with 49.8%, while women make up 50.2%. Of this, there are slightly more women than men in all age groups, except from 48 to 58 years and over 68 years with more men in percentage terms. Regarding the educational structure of citizens, there is the highest number of citizens with a completed four-year secondary school, 41.3%. The smallest is the number of citizens with completed master 2.9% and doctoral studies 0.4%. There are more men with a secondary three-year school and a doctorate, compared to women, while



there are more women with undergraduate and master studies, as well as a secondary four-year school. The age range of citizens covered by the sample is from 18 to 90 years, the mean value is 39.95 years (men 40.9 - SD = 14.176 and women 38.61 - SD = 14.278), and the standard deviation is 14.244 years (Figure 4). In the whole sample, 54.6% are married, 3% are widowed, 18.8% are unmarried, 2.7% are engaged and 16.9% are in a relationship. Based on the results, there are many more married men than married women. In addition, there are many more unmarried men than unmarried women. The sample includes 93.36% of Orthodox Christians, 2.60% of Roman Catholics, 1.80% of Muslims, and 1.40% of atheists. On the other hand, it includes 3.1% of respondents, who according to their personal perception are absolutely not believers, 7.8% to some extent, 57.9% neither they are believers nor they are not, they are to some extent 20.7%, and 7% of respondents are absolutely believers. In addition, men are more nonreligious than women.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results show that a very small number of the respondents would provide some form of help to vulnerable people. Of those who are interested in providing assistance, most of the respondents would provide help to vulnerable people in the form of money, food and water, clothing and footwear, would volunteer, be involved in protecting material goods in the field, engage in providing help to victims in the field and in the end would engage in shelter centers for vulnerable people (Table 1). Based on the results presented, it can be seen that citizens will mostly provide help in the form of money, which can be related to the empathic understanding of the needs of vulnerable people. It can also be assumed that people are egoistically motivated to help, that there may be an empathic paradox, meaning that due to too much empathy they prefer to help materially rather than in contact with people.

*Table 1. Distribution of interest in providing assistance.*

	Money	Food and water	Clothes and footwear	Engagement in providing assistance	Engagement in protecting material goods	Volunteer work	Engage in shelter centers
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Yes	724 29.0	456 18.2	539 21.6	408 16.3	411 17.4	583 23.3	116 4.6
No	1620 64.8	1666 66.6	1472 58.9	1951 78.0	1950 77.0	1816 72.6	2246 89.8
Total	2344 93.8	2122 84.9	2011 80.4	2359 94.4	2361 94.4	2399 96.0	2362 94.5

Chi square indicates correlations between gender and the following variables: volunteer, money, food, clothing, help, protection, and shelter centers for vulnerable people (Table 2). Based on the results, men would, in a slightly higher percentage than women, engage as volunteers, provide help to vulnerable people in the field, and take measures to protect endangered material goods. It is assumed that men, starting from their physiological and physical predispositions, are more interested in concrete on-site activities, which can be accompanied by various risks to life and health. On the other hand, women would, in a slightly higher percentage, pay money to some of accounts for helping victims, provide help in the form of food, clothing and footwear and engage in some of the shelter centers for vulnerable people. The results can be related to certain studies which showed that women's prosocial behavior is more highly developed compared to men (Eisenberg, 1992) and are more charitable than their male counterparts (Andreoni & Vesterlund, 2001). In the research carried out by Trbojević, Otašević and Mitrović (2015), the predictive role of gender in helping behavior was not confirmed. Gender differences are inconsistent and it is necessary to define precisely the type of help, while the help motives differ between men and women.

*Table 2. The effect of gender on the provision of assistance.*

	$\chi^2$	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)	Cramers V
Volunteer work	91.1	1	.000*	.195
Money	8.3	1	.004*	.060
Food and water	30.2	1	.000*	.119
Clothing	31.9	1	.000*	.126
Engagement in providing assistance	63.6	1	.000*	.164
Engagement in protecting material goods	141.0	1	.000*	.244
Engage in shelter centers	6.8	1	.009*	.054

*\*The difference is significant at the 0.05 level*

Chi square indicates correlations between age and the following variables: volunteer, money, clothing, help, protection, shelter center. There was no statistically significant correlation with variable of food (Table 3). In relation to volunteering, citizens aged 18-28 years would engage to the greatest extent compared to those over 68 years of age. The results of the research are expected, given that the younger people are healthier, more capable and more durable. Surely, further research needs to be carried out and the reasons for such results must be examined. Money as a form of help, would most likely be paid by citizens aged 58 to 68 years, unlike those from 68 to 78 years. Help in the form of clothing and footwear, would mostly be provided by citizens aged 28 to 38 years compared to those over 68 years of age. When it comes to engagement in providing help in the field, the citizens aged between 18 and 28 years would mostly engage in relation to those over 68 years of age. Protection of material

goods in affected areas would be mostly performed by citizens aged 38-48 in relation to those over 68 years of age. Citizens aged between 18 and 28 years would mostly engage in shelter centers, in contrast to those between 58 and 68 years of age. When analyzing the results, it is observed that citizens older than 68 years would to the smallest extend volunteer, give money, clothes and footwear, engage in providing assistance to people in the field and protecting the material goods of people. The results thus obtained can be related to the universal features of the elderly, such as gradual decline in the individual's living standard, withdrawal and loss of important life roles, more frequent reporting of social and health risks, increased sensitivity and vulnerability, dependence on social protection (Milanović, Pantelić, Trajković, & Sporiš, 2011; Perišić, 2013).

*Table 3. The effect of age on the provision of assistance.*

	$\chi^2$	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)	Cramers V
Volunteer work	45.7	6	.000*	.138
Money	13.7	6	.033*	.077
Food and water	12.2	6	.057	.076
Clothing	13.0	6	.043*	.081
Engagement in providing assistance	45.9	6	.000*	.140
Engagement in protecting material goods	21.7	6	.001*	.096
Engage in shelter centers	17.9	6	.006*	.087

*\*The difference is significant at the 0.05 level*

Chi square indicates correlations between education and the following variables: volunteer, money, food, clothes, help, shelter center. There was no statistically significant relationship with variable of protection (Table 4). Citizens who have completed college are most likely to engage as volunteers unlike those with primary school. It can be assumed that citizens with completed primary education do not have a sufficiently developed awareness of the importance of volunteering, but also that they are busier and exhausted by performing various physical and craft jobs. Citizens with completed master studies are most likely to pay money to help victims, compared to those with elementary school. Also, it has been found that citizens with a university degree are more likely to give money than those with elementary school. Food and water help would be mostly provided by citizens with doctoral titles unlike those with completed primary school. Thereby, it has been found that faculty educated citizens are more likely to provide such assistance compared to college educated citizens. Citizens with secondary education are more likely to engage in helping people in affected areas than those with primary education. In addition, it has been found that faculty educated citizens are more likely to engage than those with college education. College educated citizens are more likely to engaged in shelter centers than those with elementary education. On the

other hand, citizens with secondary education are more likely to engage in shelter centers than faculty educated citizens. University education is aimed to encourage socially responsible behavior of citizens (Ledić & Ćulum, 2010), and it reflects on all spheres of the social life of citizens. The research results showed that more educated citizens are more interested in providing different forms of assistance than those with the lowest level of education. The results can be linked to the assumption that more educated citizens have a more developed awareness, due to a more comprehensive and longer education process on the necessity of providing assistance to vulnerable people.

*Table 4. The effect of educational level on the provision of assistance.*

	$\chi^2$	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)	Cramers V
Volunteer work	31.2	6	.000*	.114
Money	80.1	6	.000*	.185
Food and water	74.0	6	.000*	.187
Clothing	119.5	6	.000*	.244
Engagement in providing assistance	58.9	6	.000*	.158
Engagement in protecting material goods	11.7	6	.068	.070
Engage in shelter centers	22.3	6	.001*	.097

*\*The difference is significant at the 0.05 level*

Chi square indicates correlations between marital status and the following variables: volunteer; money, food, clothing, help, protection, shelter center (Table 5). Citizens who are not in a relationship would rather volunteer than those who are divorced. Compared to married citizens, the citizens who are in a relationship would volunteer to a greater extent. Help in the form of money would mostly be given by married citizens unlike those who are widows/widowers. In addition, citizens who are single are more likely to provide such help than those who are divorced. Similar results in relation to financial aid were obtained when it comes to help in the form of food and water where it was found that such help would be given mostly by married people unlike divorced ones. Also, citizens who are in a relationship are more likely to give such help than those who are single. When it comes to providing help in the form of clothing and footwear, most of the help would be given by divorced citizens in relation to widows/widowers. Citizens who are single are more likely to engage in providing help in the field than widows. It is assumed that citizens who are single have more free time and are more interested in establishing social contacts. Thereby, it has been established that citizens who are in a relationship are more likely to engage in the field than married citizens. Citizens who are in a relationship are most likely to engage in protecting material goods unlike those who are widows/widowers. On the other hand, married citizens would be more engaged than divorced. When it comes to

shelter centers for vulnerable people, citizens who are single are most likely to engage unlike divorced people. On the other hand, engaged citizens are more likely to get involved than those who are in a relationship. Given the fact that the marriage is a type of union that is not primarily concerned with material wealth, but with establishing good relations, forming family and optimal psychosocial conditions, it is expected that married are most likely to give help in the form of food and water.

*Table 5. The effect of marital status on the provision of assistance.*

	$\chi^2$	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)	Cramers V
Volunteer work	65.9	5	.000*	.166
Money	18.7	5	.002*	.089
Food and water	16.3	5	.006*	.088
Clothing	20.2	5	.001*	.100
Engagement in providing assistance	37.9	5	.000*	.127
Engagement in protecting material goods	19.3	5	.002*	.091
Engage in shelter centers	37.6	5	.000*	.126

*\*The difference is significant at the 0.05 level*

Chi square indicates correlations between employment and the following variables: money, food, clothing, help, protection, shelter center. There was no statistically significant association with the variable of volunteer (Table 6). Help in the form of money would be mostly provided by the employed in relation to the unemployed citizens. Also, they are most likely to give help in food and water, clothing and footwear. It can be assumed that employed citizens have more money to provide help in the form of money, food and water, clothing and footwear. On the other hand, unemployed citizens are most likely to engage in centers for receiving vulnerable people compared to employees. The results obtained can be related to the fact that unemployed citizens have much more free time allowing them to engage in the centers for receiving vulnerable people, or they have a higher degree of empathy with the affected people.

*Table 6. The effect of employment on the provision of assistance.*

	$\chi^2$	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)	Cramers V
Volunteer work	1.67	1	.196	.027
Money	47.2	1	.000*	.144
Food and water	14.0	1	.000*	.083
Clothing	19.9	1	.000*	.101
Engagement in providing assistance	4.7	1	.030*	.046
Engagement in protecting material goods	15.9	1	.000*	.083
Engage in shelter centers	13.6	1	.000*	.077

*\*The difference is significant at the 0.05 level*

Chi square indicates correlations between the income level and the following variables: money, food, clothing, help, protection. There was no statistically significant relationship with the variables: volunteer, shelter center (Table 7). Help in the form of money would be mostly provided by citizens who have high incomes and then middle ones compared to those with low incomes. Similar to the previous result, help in the form of food and water, clothing and footwear would be mostly given by citizens with high incomes than those with low incomes. It can be concluded that with the increase in the level of income, there is a growing interest in providing various types of help. When it comes to engaging in providing help in the field, the results are different. Middle-income citizens are most likely to engage unlike those with low incomes. Middle-income citizens are most likely to engage in protecting material goods in affected areas unlike those with high incomes. Low-income citizens are most likely to engage in shelter centers for affected people unlike those with high incomes. It is assumed that citizens who do not have sufficient income, and want to help, engage in providing help which does not require money or other supplies, such as shelter centers for vulnerable people.

*Table 7. The effect of income level on the provision of assistance.*

	$\chi^2$	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)	Cramers V
Volunteer work	3.5	3	.319	.040
Money	44.8	3	.000*	.143
Food and water	30.9	3	.000*	.124
Clothing	49.9	3	.000*	.163
Engagement in providing assistance	15.3	3	.002*	.083
Engagement in protecting material goods	23.2	3	.000*	.102
Engage in shelter centers	3.5	3	.311	.040

*\*The difference is significant at the 0.05 level*

Chi square indicates correlations between the perception of religiousness and the following variables: volunteer, help, protection, shelter center. There was no statistically significant correlation with variables: money, food, clothing (Table 8). In addition, the perception of the level of personal religiousness was measured on a scale from 1 (in absolute degree, non-religious) to 5 (in absolute sense, religious). Citizens who emphasize that they are absolutely believers are most likely to engage as volunteers in relation to those who are believers to a certain extent. The results obtained can be explained by the fact that believers are expected to do good deeds and help other people. When it comes to providing help to vulnerable people in the field, those who point out that they are absolutely unbelievers are most likely to engage in relation to those who are unbelievers to some extent. It can be assumed that citizens who are not believers want to provide help to

vulnerable people, starting from the fact that it could happen to them. In protecting material goods in an endangered area, citizens who are absolutely unbelievers are most likely to engage unlike those who are absolutely believers. Citizens who are absolutely unbelievers are most likely to engage in shelter centers unlike those who are believers to some extent. An explanation of the above results could be sought in the perspective of believers that everything comes from God and should be left to superior forces. This could explain the growing interest of citizens who are not believers in providing certain types of help.

*Table 8. The effect of perception of religiosity level on the provision of assistance.*

	$\chi^2$	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)	Cramers V
Volunteer work	29.6	4	.000*	.113
Money	8.0	4	.090	.060
Food and water	2.6	4	.619	.036
Clothing	2.5	4	.632	.036
Engagement in providing assistance	13.3	4	.010*	.076
Engagement in protecting material goods	13.8	4	.008*	.078
Engage in shelter centers	41.7	4	.000*	.135

*\*The difference is significant at the 0.05 level*

As mentioned, since a very small number of respondents would provide some form of help to vulnerable people, the authors have decided to explore the perception of citizens on barriers to providing help to vulnerable people because of natural disasters. The results show that 15.5% of the respondents point out that their help would not mean much to the affected citizens ( $M = 2.62$ ), 18.8% that the others helped enough ( $M = 2.73$ ), 23.5% that it was the job of state authorities/first responders ( $M = 2.95$ ), 18.6% that they expected the citizens from affected areas would be primarily engaged ( $M = 2.79$ ), 16.5% did not have enough time for such activities ( $M = 2.62$ ) and 10.3% that such activities cost too much ( $M = 2.36$ ). Analyzing the results, it was found that citizens most often do not provide help to affected people because they consider it to be the job of state authorities. It can be assumed that citizens have not sufficiently developed awareness of the importance, goals and activities of volunteering as the most significant indirect assistance to the relevant state authorities in solving certain problems. In addition, citizens need to be informed of the fact that the help of volunteers can be of crucial importance in mitigating the consequences of natural disasters, given the lack of human and material capacities available to state authorities, necessity for fast and efficient intervention in providing first aid to vulnerable people, necessary assistance to members of first responders, etc. Certainly, the results can be seen through the prism of the sociological and cultural phenomenon

that citizens rely on the state and the first responders perceiving them as guarantors of security. Surely, when it comes to natural disasters, it is expected that people will rely more on state bodies than on their resources as they believe it is one of its tasks.

*Table 9. Barriers in providing assistance.*

	My help would not mean much	Others helped enough	It is the job of state authorities emergenc y-rescue services	I expected citizens from flood affected areas to be primarily engaged	I did not have time for such activities	Too expensive
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Absolutely disagree	648 25.9	528 21.1	424 17.0	490 19.6	660 26.4	812 32.5
To some extent disagree	237 9.5	290 11.6	217 8.7	267 10.7	257 10.3	276 11.0
Neither agree nor disagree	1052 42.1	1034 41.4	1087 43.5	1073 42.9	980 39.2	963 38.5
To some extent disagree	132 5.3	217 8.7	226 9.0	179 7.2	114 4.6	94 3.8
Absolutely disagree	254 10.2	253 10.1	363 14.5	290 11.6	298 11.9	162 6.5
Total	2323 92.9	2322 92.9	2317 92.7	2299 92.0	2309 92.4	2307 92.3

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Causing serious consequences for people and their property, natural disasters (floods, earthquakes, forest fires, etc.) in Serbia constantly endanger the safety of its citizens. Although serious efforts are made by the relevant authorities and first responders to prevent or mitigate the consequences of such events, a large number of citizens continue to be directly or indirectly threatened. On the other hand, despite the developed and modern legislative regulations, training, plans and equipment of first responders in Serbia for responding to natural disasters, assistance and engagement of citizens in affected areas is still of crucial importance for more efficient response. For these reasons, the authors in the work using quantitative research tradition examined factors of influence on citizens' attitudes towards helping affected people and volunteering during natural disasters. Although in Serbia, which is widely known in the public, the average wage is low and the unemployment rate is higher than in certain countries in the region, it has been found that respondents are most likely to provide help to vulnerable people in the form of money, and then in the form in clothing and footwear, food and water. Such results are somewhat expected, bearing in mind that



money is a more universal means of assistance that enables the supply of food, but also the restoration of a home or apartment. Also, the results show that citizens would volunteer much more than engaging in the centers for receiving vulnerable people. Based on these results, additional research needs to be carried out in order to examine the reasons why citizens would rather give money as a form of help and why they would rather volunteer than engage in the shelter center for vulnerable people.

Motivation to provide help to endangered people and volunteering is, as mentioned above, affected by various personal and environmental factors. Thereby, the authors examining the barriers for providing help and volunteering found that as a reason for not providing help and volunteering, citizens mostly state that it is the job of state authorities, that others have helped enough, that citizens from affected areas primarily should be engaged, that they did not have enough time for such activities and that such activities cost too much. As it can be seen from the results presented, although it was expected that money would represent the main barrier, it was established that it is the attitude of the citizens that this is the job of state bodies. Reasons can be found in a specific cultural system in which citizens relies more or less on the state as a kind of guarantor of their security.

By examining the impacts of gender, age, level of education, marital status, employment status, income level and perceptions of personal religiosity on attitudes to help vulnerable people and volunteering, a rich treasury of data has emerged. Given the research results of impacts of these factors, it is very important to stimulate the citizens of different genders to get involved more in helping in those forms where it is determined to help more. It is necessary to stimulate men to help more in the field, while women in centers because these are gender differences and should not be eliminated, but education programs should take into account relevant motives in relation to gender, and in relation to other characteristics of individuals, as well.

Based on the results related to impacts of the age of citizens, it is necessary to influence the citizens over 68 years of age to be more engaged as volunteers, and to provide specific help having in mind their health and financial status. They should be stimulated to help in a certain way such as giving information, stacking clothes, talking to victims etc. It is also necessary to influence the citizens with lower education levels to engage more in the provision of various forms of help and volunteering. In addition, it is essential to influence the citizens who are absolutely believers to engage in providing assistance and protecting material goods in the field and in shelter centers for vulnerable people, etc. The research results can be used when designing appropriate strategies and programs for improving the provision of help and the work of volunteer organizations, and, on the other hand, for the establishment of a more effective and comprehensive system for managing natural disasters. On this occasion, particular attention should be paid to the results of the examined effects of certain personal and

environmental factors. Despite the efforts to highlight most of the issues of providing help and volunteering in natural disasters, a large number of research questions remain to be actualized in future research. One of these questions also refers to the examination of the influence of television, radio, the Internet, etc. on the motivation of citizens to provide help and volunteering.

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## ИСПИТИВАЊЕ СТАВОВА ГРАЂАНА О ПРУЖАЊУ ПОМОЋИ УГРОЖЕНИМ ЉУДИМА И ВОЛОНТИРАЊУ ЗА ВРЕМЕ КАТАСТРОФА

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### Резиме

Предмет квантитативног истраживања представља испитивање фактора који утичу на ставове грађана о пружању помоћи угроженим људима и волонтирању за време природних катастрофа. При томе, аутори су се определили да испитају повезаност одређених личних и срединских фактора, као што су пол, године старости, ниво образовања, брачни статус, запосленост, висина прихода и перцепција личне религиозности, са ставовима о пружању помоћи угроженим људима и волонтирању за време природних катастрофа. Циљ спроведеног истраживања огледа се у научној дескрипцији, тј. систематизацији постојећег знања о пружању помоћи угроженим људима и волонтирању за време природних катастрофа, унапређењу постојеће емпиријске грађе, упоређивању остварених резултата са резултатима претходних истраживања, као и конципирању будућих истраживања на ову тему. Анкетни упитник коришћен у процесу истраживања садржао је општи и посебни део. У оквиру општег дела испитаницима су постављена питања о њиховим демографским и социо-економским карактеристикама. Посебан део анкетног упитника односи се на врсте помоћи које особа може пружити током природних катастрофа.

Резултати истраживања показују да би 29% испитаника пружило помоћ угроженим људима у виду новца, 18,2% у виду хране и воде, 21,6% у виду одеће и обуће, 23,3% би волонтирало, док би се 4,6% ангажовало у центрима за пријем угрожених људи. Поред тога, утврђено је да не постоји статистички значајна повезаност ставова о пружању помоћи у виду новца са статусом запослености. Са друге стране, ставови о волонтерству и пружању помоћи у виду хране и воде нису повезани са статусом запослености испитаника. Полазећи од добијених резултата истраживања, доносиоци одлука могу осмислити образовне стратегије и програме усмерене ка успостављању ефикаснијег и свеобухватнијег система пружања помоћи угроженим људима од последица природних катастрофа.