

NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE UNIVERSITY

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presentation of the doctoral (PhD) dissertation with the title

**Characteristic features of the voluntary charitable activity
in the light of the experience of the migration wave of the
1990s and 2015s**

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1. DEFINITION OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM

The issue of migration in Hungary has not dominated the main direction of social science research for many decades, nowadays, however, research into the possibility of cooperating with different ethnic and cultural groups arriving with refugee waves has become of high importance. Xenophobia towards those who arrived by the migration waves made this topic particularly relevant. Antagonism towards the strangers culminated during the refugee crisis of 2015, it became the topic of common talk and caused social and cultural fault-lines. The public was rather dealing with the possible threats that originated from the intercultural differences than with the positive returns of migration. Xenophobia became the organic part of society wide view system, burdening it with mistrust and prejudice at the expense of the immigrants.

My dissertation contains the development of the hosting attitudes towards the strangers referring to the 1900s and 2015s, the reasons of their changes and the exploration of the possible connections between them. The main scientific problem of my topic choice is that no survey has been made about the combined effect of the factors that changes xenophobia of the volunteers assisting the refugees until now which could have explored the casual relationships too, there is not enough scientific evidences regarding their interaction. Although, the domestic researches have been dealing with the attitude of the majority groups towards the refugees but the survey of the development of the attitudes of the volunteers assisting the refugees towards the strangers still needed to be undertaken.

2. HYPOTHESES

I built my research on the scientific examinations I have learned from the theoretical materials, I drafted my hypothesis based on them. The theory of contact hypothesis, the extended contact effect, the theory of integrated threats¹ and the incorporation of altruism were emphasized significantly.

1. Hypothesis:

I assume that in case of migration wave of the refugees fleeing the Balkan war in the 1990s, xenophobia was reflected in the attitudes and interactions of the volunteers less than in the case of the migration wave in 2015.

1/ a Sub-hypothesis:

I assume that during the development of the interpersonal connections between the hosts and the refugees fleeing the Balkan war to our country after the 1990s, the assisting persons became

¹ In my essay I use this previous name of „Theory of Integrated Threat” based on the theory of Stephan-Stephan (2000). In. SZABÓ Ágnes: *A bevándorlókkal szembeni attitűdöt meghatározó demográfiai és pszichológiai*

able to take up the perspective of the refugees and understand the historical situations of the immigrants and the conditions of the contact hypothesis were implemented which could contribute to the change of xenophobia into a positive direction.

1/b Sub-hypothesis:

I assume that the conditions of the contact hypothesis have only been partially fulfilled in the interpersonal connections between the volunteers and the refugees who arrived in 2015 and the identification of those engaged in charitable activities with the historical situation were also lacking. The relationship burden between hosts and immigrants and the lack of identification turned the hidden implicit prejudice that was hidden until that time into open hostility.

2. Hypothesis:

I assume that the priority of both factors of the integrated intergroup threat was dominant in the development of the attitudes in connection with immigration after 2015 and their perception defined the attitude in connection with immigration more strongly than in the case of migration in the 1990s.

2/a Sub-hypothesis:

I assume that during the migration in the 1990s the multi-ethnic community has emerged as a source of conflicts which was latent during the cohabitation. Although, the helpers could mostly handle this, so, this did not induce the sense of threat.

2/b Sub-hypothesis:

I think that the conflicts of the 2015 period have gone beyond the field of cultural and religious diversity and the feeling of an emerging integrated intergroup threat overwrote other factors that generated xenophobia and the feeling of threat supported the increase of the degree of xenophobia of the sample that was examined.

3. Hypothesis:

After my assumption, the stronger the realistic and symbolic idea of threat of the helpers' representatives was the criteria of admission became even stricter after the migration events in 2015. I assume that the previous foreign friendship has practically disappeared and after the

migration wave of 2015 the rejection of all stranger groups has globally increased in the examined community.

4. Hypothesis:

I assume that that the helpers from Nagyatád in the 1990s have emphasized the form of the mutual understanding of the communicative action theory of Habermas in altruistic assistance, while, in the case of the refugee wave of 2015 the volunteers performing charity activity were led by the activity of strategic form by Habermas. The form of assistance has been integrated into the activity of the volunteers in humanitarian work in the two historical periods.

4/a Sub-hypothesis:

One can assume that the opinion community and the action activity have been developed by the persons providing altruist assistance in the two different migration periods and they have dimensioned the community altruistic activity and the movement of the prejudice attitudes at different extents too.

4/b Sub-hypothesis:

I assume that the intensity of the community action activity was different within the framework of the majority-minority context in the examined migration waves and it was defined by different motivation each.

3. RESEARCH GOALS

The sphere of my research questions in connection with my scientific issue is dealing with the effects of the change of hosting attitudes regarding strangers taken on prejudice, examining the approach of the volunteers who live next to the asylum institutions and perform assistance activities. The main goal of my research is to explore the until now unknown circumstances and components of xenophobia that finally causes prejudice through examining the approach of the volunteers. I want to reach my main goals with the fulfilment of the following partial goals:

My goal was to map the attitudes of the volunteers who provide assistance for the refugees in terms of the examined migration periods in the light of the realization of the contents of the contact hypothesis theory after having introduced the reasons, types and distorting factors of the development of the prejudice process. I have examined whether the conditions of the contact hypothesis that influence prejudice had some attitude moving effect and whether the sense of danger owing to migration has appeared in the attitude of the volunteers in the

intercultural meetings beside the traditional factors (visible and audible strangeness) that induce xenophobia.

As a goal I examined how the volunteer helpers handled the intercultural confrontations and whether they have also been escalated to other levels of the society. Whether the integrated threat and their symbolic factors have appeared, if yes, how they effected the attitude of the helpers towards the strangers. During the intercultural confrontations whether they remained on the field of culture and religion or the conflicts have escalated to other scenes of the society too and I wanted to explore whether the realistic and symbolic factors of the integrated threat have appeared and how the perception of threat affected the attitude of the helpers towards the strangers. I wanted to crawl whether the judgement of the foreign population have changed after the migration wave in 2015 and what kind of connections between the admission conditions and the geniality could be detected. I wanted to examine the connection between the perception of integrated threat and the admission criteria towards the refugees.

I aimed to examine the forms of assistance in the two periods and whether the form of support depended on the practical experiences of the given migration context and to clear whether the development of the opinion climate influenced their acting activity. My aim was to explore the motivations of the community acting altruism during the two periods, their targets, similarities and differences. Finally, coming back to my main targets I examined the attitudes of the helpers towards the strangers and the movement of their prejudice as the final conclusion of their migration experiences. With the realisation of my above mentioned targets which explore the connections between the sociological and social psychological criteria, I hope I can contribute to the mapping of the effects produced in the attitudes of the helpers towards the strangers.

4. RESEARCH METHODS

The approach of the topic is based on interdisciplinary, sociological and socio-psychological foundations but it also refers to a psychological field. In the course of my research I relied on the secondary sources published in print by the deductive method, on the other hand I conducted empirical research.

As a first step, I carried out extensive data collection activities. I studied the relevant national and international professional literature, the historical researches, public researches and the available scientific publications and doctoral (*PhD*) dissertations in the field of prejudice,

xenophobia and volunteering. I have learnt the national press news and reports published in the newspapers of the regions in the researched period which were related to my topic. I processed the literature background material by the method of analysis and synthesis.

To examine the scientific problem, it is advisable to use several methods and techniques, so I combined the method of quantitative (looking for quantitative indicators) questionnaire survey with the method of qualitative (to understand the problem) interviewing. In doing so, I used the specific methodology of recollection, the “*oral history*” technique, to recall previous events. The anonymous method of the questionnaire method made the numeracy unquestionable but the interviewing provided an opportunity to explore the hidden casual relationships. The empiric research was realised in several phases, I conducted questionnaire survey in 2014 and 2016, I made interviews in 2016.

The condition of the questionnaire survey was adulthood and voluntary completion. The questionnaire did not contain any sensitive data that violated personal rights. All incoming data were processed and I used the method of abstraction and generalization to evaluate the results and analyse the conclusions that can be drawn from them. I used the method of qualitative content analysis to process the content of the interviews, I chose context analysis as analysis option.²

The quantitative method, completed with the qualitative method, gave a more accurate picture about the casual relationships of attitudes towards strangers, the research results became more nuanced and at the same time they have complied with the principles of reliability and creditability. After the acquisition and processing of the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge, as well as the systematization of the revealed data and results, I prepared the dissertation.

I have published my research results in Hungarian and also in a foreign language in scientific journals and presented it in the framework of scientific lectures. I finished the research on 6th of January 2020.

It should be noted that it is legally very difficult to name the strangers with a single collective term that adequately and clearly refers to their status. To bridge this, I used the terms “migrant,” “stranger,” “refugee” or “immigrant” whenever we talked about people in multiple legal classes at once, or when their legal status was not known to me.

² HELTAI Erzsébet, TARJÁNYI József: *A szociológiai interjú készítése. Adatfelvétel módszertan*. In. T Budapest, 1999. január. URL: <http://old.tarki.hu/adatbank-h/kutjel/html/a509.html> Letöltési idő: 2020.04.22.

5. STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

In the first chapter, after the introduction, I presented the topicality and reason of my choice of the topic and the scientific issues related to my research. This section included the hypotheses, research objectives and I introduced the applied research methods and the structure of my dissertation. In the second part of the dissertation, the theoretical basis and the literature background were reviewed, processed and updated. I listed the previous interpretations of xenophobia and the historical antecedents of related research, within the framework of which I placed the concepts learned in the literature review in the research historical system of the concept. I then moved on to the theories of xenophobia and then to the psychologically and socially dominant approach of the concept under study. Here I also presented the international research that examined the topic of xenophobia from new perspectives. Narrowing down from the general to the specific, I also presented the relevant Hungarian prejudice studies, focusing on their causal correlations in line with international research.

In the third chapter, I explored, as an international outlook, the researches related to the anti-alien attitudes of the population of the Visegrád countries since their regime change, and presented how the mission of V4 nation forces can be linked to the countries' migration policies.

In the fourth chapter, I presented my research results. In my empirical study, I pointed out the factors influencing attitudes towards strangers that shaped the opinions of the volunteers studied, as well as the circumstances that influenced thinking about the presence of strangers. After processing the data of the semi-structured interviews and the questionnaire survey, I present the conclusions filtered from them here.

In the fifth chapter I summarized my work and based on my new scientific results, I made a proposal for their usability. Figures and tables are placed in the text, appendices and enclosures can be found at the end of the dissertation.

6. SUMMARIZED CONCLUSIONS

The assumptions of my hypothesis No. 1 were clearly explored by the data of my empiric survey and they demonstrated the differences in the practical implementation of the contact hypothesis theory in relation to the experiences of the two refugee waves. I pointed out that in the period under study in the 1990s, the fulfilment of the conditions of the contact hypothesis greatly reduced the hostile attitude towards the refugees, because the establishment of equal status between host volunteers and refugees was achieved. Cooperation for the common overriding goals has risen to such a level during the deepening of the interpersonal relationships that the

individuals became able to take on the perspectives of each other, mutually learn and acknowledge the perspectives of „otherness”.

The relationship between hosts and immigrants in Nagyatád could be characterised by the recognition and transfer of the cultural characteristics, development of intercultural trust, as the benefit of the process the attitudes of the volunteers has been basically shifted in the direction of positive judgement of the strangers accompanied by the significant decrease in prejudice. In the second migration period examined, in 2015, the empirically explored results proved that the social distance in the cultural relationship care of equal status was not realised and the social distance between the hierarchy of the helpers and the immigrants has increased to a great extent. The feelings that translate into the attitudes of the volunteer helpers of 2015 reflected the burden of the host-admitted relationship and their typical emotional reaction was in lack of compassion. The relationship loaded with atrocities resulted in a gradually unfolding, increasing degree of xenophobia. The perception of the cultural differences and the failure of volunteers to provide humanitarian assistance caused internal tension in the affected helpers, and due to the dissonance in interpersonal relationships and failures in unfulfilled help the hitherto tacit prejudice has become an open-minded attitude, so that their prejudice has increased in proportion to the degree of their xenophobia.

I based the ideas of my hypothesis No. 2 on the problem of integrated threat and, taking into account its contents, I established that there were ethnic disagreements during the multicultural coexistence in the course of the 1990s immigration but under the multicultural circumstances in Nagyatád that was examined the hostile feeling generated by them has been manifested only latent and to a small extent. As a result of the attitudes moving into a positive direction, the intercultural dissonances remained on the field of cultural-religious differences, they did not escalate into a larger-scale conflict. During the several years of coexistence, the anxiety of the host volunteers gradually disappeared, neither a symbolic nor a realistic sense of threat appeared, so neither the presence of refugees nor the perception of cultural differences generated a sense of integrated threat.

The experience of the 2015 refugee crisis marked a turning point in the acceptance of strangers by the volunteer helpers. In my empirical research, I discovered that after 2015, the guiding principle for the evolution of volunteers' attitudes towards strangers was the perception of integrated threat factors. As a cumulative effect, the ethnic groups that arrived in 2015 seemed to threaten the subjective safety of volunteers, disrespect their culture, endanger their jobs, introduce diseases and this is basically fundamentally responsible for the social problem of xenophobia. As a result of the detection of the dangers, the search for the causes of the migration

situation started and the refugees proved to be an ideal scapegoat. Consequently, intercultural differences have not only remained in the field of cultural-religious difference but have also escalated into other areas of the social existence of helpers, e.g. to the dimensions of the social sphere, health care, economy. I found that the sense of danger posed by the realistic and symbolic aspects of the threat in the examined persons overwrote previous, other factors provoking xenophobic which could be connected to perception of the volunteers' own culture and world view. At the same time, the perception of threat has strengthened their own group identity, encouraging the helpers to find solutions to migration problems as soon as possible but it was proved that they, due to their activities, showed different feelings than those perceived in the social mood. As a reason for this, I discovered that in their attitudes there is an inner urge to help and good sense has overridden the possibility of a large increase in hostility similar to that experienced in the society. Based on the results of my empirical research, a combination of several factors led to an increase in xenophobic attitudes due to complex perceptions of the components of integrated threats and fear of risk-generating factors, but it did not exceed the factors of the representative social researches.

The assumptions of my hypothesis No. 3 revealed the consequences of the realization of the contents of the integrated intergroup threat theory. I discovered that the lack of usefulness of the ethnic groups appeared as a factor of symbolic threat, and I pointed out that the stronger the perception of symbolic and realistic threat of the representatives of the given hosting community was the more stricter the admission criteria for the immigrants was.

However, the application of the stricter admission criteria did not apply to the Hungarian refugees from the neighbouring countries, their assessment became more positive than that of all ethnic groups, thus referring to the cohesion but at the same time to the self-defence. As a result, after 2015, all foreign ethnic groups were rejected without any discrimination, if they could not meet the admission requirements for the respect of the Hungarian culture, language and the acceptance of the domestic cultural environments that were tightened by the volunteers. As a result of the sense of danger, all ethnic groups fell prey to global withdrawal of sympathy, friendliness was reduced to the minimum and after the great wave of migrants in 2015, there was a global increase in rejection of all foreign ethnic groups among the volunteers surveyed. In the attitude of the examined persons there was a shift into a negative direction.

In my hypothesis No. 4 I explored the question how and on what motivation basis the volunteers have carried out their charity work. I explored that the emergence of the beneficial effect of Batson's empathy-altruism represented by the volunteer helpers in the relationship between hosts and admitted persons of the multicultural community in Nagyatád conducted the

incorporation of the communicative activity form of Habermas into their support. The success-orientation of philanthropic work excluded its egocentricity, its main character of the assistance was humanity, willingness to compromise and the positive attitude towards strangers.

I pointed out that the assistance activities of the volunteers of Nagyatád exhausted the criterion of altruism, according to which the intention of the helpers to support them was determined primarily by the selfless help of the refugees, unconditional reciprocity and secondarily by the efforts to convey the intercultural values of the helpers.

Regarding the second migration period examined, I found that during the 2015 refugee crisis, the form of supportive action of volunteering underwent a structural change, the communicative action was replaced by altruistic support in the form of strategic action. My hypothesis was also confirmed by the revealed fact that during this period the application strategic form of action of humanitarian aid workers depended on the extent and perception of the effectiveness of their influence on the decisions of external groups, and the chosen form of action was able to become one of the possible indicators influencing social exclusion or inclusion, also forecasting the direction of the development of the attitudes towards strangers.

I pointed out that the activity of the altruistic volunteers of the 2015 migration period was motivated first of all by the prevention of danger they felt from the side of the strangers, which caused the strengthening of the efforts to unify the group identity of the helpers. During the process, the factor of the relationship networks in 2015 representing a significant power was the inter-linking which included the necessity of the trust of the own group for each other, mutuality and cooperation. I discovered that the common perception of the threat in the examined period of 2015 was the factor that determined the volunteers' own group norm, their opinion identity and consequently the development of their prejudice attitude towards the strangers.

Consequently, the shared opinion identity created a common level of activity of varying degrees and intensity. In the migration situation of the 1990s, the motivation stemmed from a moral conviction that was identified with the injustices suffered by the war refugees. A united moral conviction for a good cause and a joy over perceived efficiency guided the pursuit of improving the unjust situation in which the transfer of cultural values was also included, thus alleviating the extent of anti-alien attitudes.

I discovered that in the 2015 migration situation, the action activism of helping activities became project-oriented, it aimed at eliminating the uncomfortable migration situation, this intention defined the basic norm in group orientation. In the 2015 refugee crisis, moral outrage and the threat to the norm and cultural values of one's own group were the motivating factors

that moved the federal action altruism. I have shown that although there were incentives for collective action in the second migration period, the perceived lack of aid effectiveness did not actively stimulate action, so the main goal of the 2015 volunteers was to end the forced situation caused by migration. Meanwhile, the possibility of easing any prejudice that may arise as a result of the exchange of intercultural values did not arise.

7. NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

1. I was the first researcher who carried out analysis about the change of the xenophobe attitude of the helpers living in the environment of the Hungarian asylum institutions and providing voluntary charity activity for the immigrant persons through the examination of the personal perceptions in the course of which I stated that in the related period the direction of displacement of their attitudes deviating from those experienced in the society was determined by their emotional mind-set that dominates in their supportive activity

2. I see it as proven that the experience of the 2015 wave of refugees marked a turning point in the change of the strangers' image of the volunteers examined. The feeling of an integrated threat to the host-immigrant relationship pushed other factors leading to xenophobia into the background. In 2015, it was not the "otherness" represented by the foreign ethnicities that was rejected by the volunteer helpers, but the immigrants considered their existence to be threatened worldview which led to a tightening of admission criteria for the strangers. The rejection of foreign ethnic groups has happened without any distinction.

3. I proved that the direction of the change in the degree of XENOPHOBIA in voluntary helpers depends on the acceptance of intercultural values, whether the group borders open, the opinion climate and the opinion identity get unified and whether the voluntary activity is determined by the emotional or the rational component.

4. I discovered that the form of action depends on the motivations that inspire volunteering. If the emotional and moral attitudes arising from identification are the motivators they are manifested in a commitment to the object of identification, which results in help in the form of purposeful, communicative actions.

In order to address the diversity of immigrants, the effectiveness of support activities and the deepening of professional self-knowledge, it may be necessary to organize and expand

intercultural, conflict management and other sensitizing competency-building training for those working on empathic compassions.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to address diversity of immigrants, the effectiveness of support activities and the deepening of the professional knowledge could become necessary to organize and expand intercultural, conflict managing and other sensitizing competency-building trainings for those working on the fields where they can start on the way to the emphatic sympathy by reason of meeting other persons with other cultures. Immigrant administrators, working in penitentiary areas, staff in reception centres and guarded accommodation, working in the health and social care sectors and staff in specialist educational establishments belong to the group fulfilling special needs.

The level of xenophobia that is typical in Hungary and which can be considered particularly high in the international comparison, justifies the further expansion of research not only in law enforcement and penitentiary bodies but also in co-operation authorities. I cannot go without saying about the sacrificial work of the Hungarian Armed Forces and law enforcement agencies in the border regions of our country and abroad. Thus, the results of my research, e.g. the attitudes of the volunteers towards strangers in the given migration contexts can also convey an up-to-date message to them in terms of performing the homeland and law enforcement tasks related to migrants that are still relevant today. I hope to help the members of the armed forces to be able to engage in bilateral relations with strangers. The context of the mechanism of action of attitudes towards strangers could, on the one hand, help the home and law enforcement staff to deal with cultural differences in migration situations and on the other hand, could provide valuable data for the health and psychology field. In military education, from the level of the commander-in-chief, the germs of the ability to acquire cultural awareness must be planted for the military leaders of the future (but already in the present), so that they do not have any problem to contact foreign cultures in the future.

I also recommend my research to NGOs organizing sensitization programs that can incorporate my findings into the work experience of volunteers working in their own group.

In promoting charitable activity, accepting otherness, recognizing prejudice and addressing exclusion could successfully reduce hostility.

Therefore, the usability of the results of altruistic volunteering explored in my research may help to change the attitudes of recipients towards strangers and may result in a decreasing degree of prejudice in the future .

9. PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY OF RESEARCH RESULTS

I also consider the use of my scientific results to be possible in areas that interpret immigration as a sociological-social challenge and, within this framework, seek the tools and responses to reduce xenophobia. Thus, the extension may also apply to the new research which would examine the federal action activity of the young age group within the framework of a really multicultural and a more closed environment. I recommend to further think my research, how the supporting help for the strangers can be made the part of the public wealth of everyone. This kind of attitude formation would reduce the hostile attitudes of which demoralizing effect is not disputed. From a sociological and socio-psychological point of view, it would be an interesting and exciting research to build up the altruistic activity of the voluntary group which does not support the migrants, to examine the context of the process because the process exists without any naming in our everyday actions too. It would be worth examining the special networking that is built from the supporting activity not only from the point of view of supporting work of the volunteers but also from the point of view whether the process that can reduce prejudice between people in need and their helpers could be built up. I am convinced that the voluntary ally altruistic action as a tool can forge human relationships that prove to be superficial in our world today for some noble purpose.

10. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

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2. Löwi Ildikó: *A V4 országainak a modern kori bevándorlással kapcsolatos attitűdjei.*
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11. PROFESSIONAL-SCIENTIFIC CURRICULUM VITAE OF THE DOCTORAL CANDIDATE

PERSONAL DATA

Ildikó Löwi (born: Ildikó Kemenyecski)

Date of birth: 31/12/1954

STUDIES:

1. History teacher diploma: 10/09/1978

Eszterházy Károly University, Eger (Hungary)

2. International Studies 06/09/2012-10/06/2014
Kodolányi János University, Budapest (Hungary)
3. National Civil Service University, Budapest (Hungary)
Military Science Doctoral School 01/09/2014-01/09/2017
Thesis: 01/09/2014-01/09/2017
4. Intercultural Pedagogy and Psychology: 01/09/2018
Eötvös Lóránd University, Budapest (Hungary)

WORK EXPERIENCE:

2001-2017: Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Goethe Institute Language Examination Centre.

Head of Regional Language Examination Centre

1986-2000: Lőwi and Partners Language School Leader

1997-1998: BAH Reception Station in Bicske, volunteer

1994-1996: BAH Temporary Accommodation in Nagyatád, volunteer

1977-1988: Vajda János High School, Bicske history teacher

LANGUAGE SKILLS:

GERMAN COMPLEX ADVANCED LEVEL ITK ORIGO

ENGLISH COMPLEX ELEMENTARY LEVEL ITK ORIGO

OTHER SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY

Memberships: 2014-2017 Hungarian Military Science Society, NKE

Awards and honours:

Rector's diploma for excellent academic results (summa cum laude)

Kodolányi János University, 14/09/2014

APPLICATIONS:

Ildikó LŐWI: „*A diverse NATO partnership.*”

In. Hungarian Military Science Society poster competition. 05/12/ 2016