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The First to Say „Hello!": Profile and Motivation of the Volunteers in the Registration and Reception Centers for Refugees in Bulgaria

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Abstract. *The report is focused on attitudes and helping behaviour towards asylum seekers in Bulgaria. Overview of context and the current situation is presented as well as summary of the main publications on the topic. On the base of existing and ongoing volunteer program, sample of 63 applicants for volunteer position is studied based on their application documents. Descriptive statistics on the profile of the applicants and qualitative content analysis of their motivation is presented. Authentic texts are segmented and grouped on the basis of the six motivational functions served by volunteerism. Social change seems to be additional function in that case. Specifics of Social and Protective function are discussed.*

Keywords: volunteers; motivation; asylum seekers; refugees

Context

During the last years there is a raise in the number of asylum seekers in Bulgaria. According to the Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees from the beginning of 2015 till 30th of September 12 738 applications were submitted.

The war conflict in Syria is considered to be the main origin of this tendency and the situation is part of the larger context of a big refugee crisis facing both European and Asian continent. Usually seen as a "transit zone" by the migrants, Balkans region (and Bulgaria in particular) is a natural crossroad for migration flows. As a result of this recently the country is accepting groups of potential immigrants and refugees that are different in size and characteristics from those observed previously.

The new situation sets a challenge on the society in terms of defining coherent position over newcomers. Sociological surveys show significant differences in the social attitudes towards asylum seekers. Reactions vary from violence and fear (the protests of local population in the village of Rozovo in 2014 became an emblematic example) to different forms of pro-active helping behaviour.

Current article is focused on the demonstrations of pro-active helping behaviour towards asylum seekers in Bulgaria and particularly on those actions that are aimed to deliver social, educational or emotional support, rather than physical comfort – e.g. provision of clothes, food, money etc.

Situation in Bulgaria

During the last years the numbers of submitted applications and decisions taken for asylum seekers are increasing as shown on Table 1.

According to the Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees from the beginning of 2015 till 30th of September asylum seekers in Bulgaria originate predominantly from Syrian A.R. (5 069), Iraq (3 400), Afghanistan (3 269), Pakistan (422), Iran (144). Citizens of these

Table 1
Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees (2015): Information for asylum seekers and decisions taken 01.01.1993 – 30.09.2015

Year	Applications submitted	Refugee status granted	Humanitarian status granted	Refugee status refusals	Terminated procedures	Total number of decisions
2000	1755	267	421	509	996	**2193**
2001	2428	385	1185	633	657	**2860**
2002	2888	75	646	781	1762	**3264**
2003	1549	19	411	1036	528	**1994**
2004	1127	17	257	335	366	**975**
2005	822	8	78	386	478	**950**
2006	639	12	83	215	284	**594**
2007	975	13	322	245	191	**771**
2008	746	27	267	381	70	**745**
2009	853	39	228	380	91	**738**
2010	1025	20	118	386	202	**726**
2011	890	10	182	366	213	**771**
2012	1387	18	159	445	174	**796**
2013	7144	183	2279	354	824	**3640**
2014	11081	5162	1838	500	2853	**10353**
2015	12738	4123	722	546	7277	**12668**

countries are being settled in six State Registration and Reception Centers for Refugees in Bulgaria, located in Banya, Pastrogor, Harmanli and Sofia (three centers are located in the capital).

They are provided with asylum, food and medical care in the centers. Although many people leave the country even before they receive the decision on their application, there are asylum seekers (including families with children) who spend in the Registration and Reception Centers several months, some stay for more than a year.

As noted above, the main countries of origin, suppose the asylum seekers differ significantly from the local population in terms of culture, social norms and habits. Problem for establishment of social connections is not only the physical separation (fences and access control in the Centers) but the language barriers too.

Current research on public opinion and social attitudes in Bulgaria

In Bulgaria there are few research studies in the field of immigration and refugee topic, especially from the perspective of social psychology. Partially the topic is covered by sociologists, but the intensity and the scope of these researches is far from enough.

National representative study on the topic "Attitudes towards asylum seekers and refugees in Bulgaria" had been carried out in November 2013 by Alpha Research Ltd for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Regional Representation for Central Europe. The study identifies two factors, which are quite distinctive regarding the public attitudes towards refugees: first, "Working/studying abroad experience: 11% of the population currently living in the country has lived abroad because of this reason. These re-

spondents are much more positive to refugees than the average." And second: "People who do a volunteer work (21%) tend to be more positive to refugees as well." Here the volunteering is understood in very broad terms – including cause support, donations etc.

The report concludes that "volunteering is a major factor that influences people's attitudes toward refugees and their integration in particular. Nevertheless, the majority of people have not taken part in any voluntary work in the last 12 months (77%)".

Another study on social attitudes explored with focus groups in depth why certain attitudes are held and how participants respond when various facts on refugees and asylum-seekers are presented to them ("Social attitudes towards refugees and asylum-seekers and refugee integration in Bulgaria – 2012" – report of Alpha Research Ltd survey for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Regional Representation for Central Europe). Theme of the research was the integration of refugees among the host population, including those that live in close proximity to refugees and asylum-seekers.

Among the key conclusions were:

1. Refugees and asylum-seekers have a positive image among people who have had some experience with them. The more intense the experience, the more clear and positive the image. Therefore, it is of great importance that local communities especially in small and compact settlements are stimulated to communicate with asylum-seekers and refugees.
2. People seem to be most influenced by, and sympathetic to stories of refugees who flee with their families.
3. Refugee integration is perceived mostly as one-side process – either responsibility of the government or of refugees themselves. Very few participants see their personal role in this process.

In the survey some respondents recalled examples of helping behavior towards refugees with food or with directions on the street. But all examples were single acts, rather accidental than aimed. There was no reflection on ways of organized support.

Personal involvement was limited to the possibilities of giving away food and clothes: "When it comes up to further engagements, e.g. helping a refugee find a job or rent a place to live, respondents become skeptic and allude they would rather not take part. The housing and employment subjects bring out negative attitudes regarding the extent to which refugees should be supported by local community".

According to the survey: "People are not very keen on helping in refugee integration. The most the majority would do would be giving away clothes/food. Further engagements seem unrealistic for most of the respondents in the discussions. Ways to attract and persuade people to participate in volunteering activities should be sought. But first people need to be acquainted with the way refugees and asylum-seekers live in order to surmount their distrust to them."

Conclusions of these surveys emphasize the important role of volunteer experience, but at the same time raise questions about how the concept of volunteering is understood and if there are real options (even for the people with strong positive attitudes) support and helping behaviour to be manifested toward asylum seekers in Bulgaria.

Having in mind the situation with the migration flow and the perspective of growing numbers of immigrants who will need social support in their process of integration, the topic of volunteerism is very likely to become more and more important. In that connection two topics of interest appear: "Who are the people in the society, that pro-actively give social support to the asylum seekers?" and "What motivates them?". Knowledge about the profile of volunteers and the motivation underlying their behaviour can help NGO sector and governments to use more effectively the volunteer potential of the society and to manage in sufficient way the process of integration of the incoming groups of immigrants and refugees.

Concept of Volunteer work

In the literature there is a difference between *spontaneous helping behaviour* and volunteering, defined as "rather different kind of

helping, a kind that is prototypic of *planned helping*… Thus, volunteers (a) often actively seek out opportunities to help others; (b) may deliberate for considerable amounts of time about whether to volunteer, the extent of their involvement, and the degree to which particular activities fit with their own personal needs; and (c) may make a commitment to an ongoing helping relationship that may extend over a considerable period of time and that may entail considerable personal costs of time, energy, and opportunity (Clary at al., 1998)". The short definition of volunteerism can be accepted here as "ongoing, planned, and discretionary prosocial behavior that benefits non-intimate others and offers little or no tangible reward" (Penner, 2002).

From this perspective we can say that a very small number of people in Bulgaria actually are involved in volunteer work with the groups of asylum seekers. In the last years the non-government sector is trying to mobilize and direct the volunteer forces in the society.

Motivation

Clary at al. (1998) support the idea of complex motivational foundations of volunteer activity. They base their Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) – an instrument designed to measure the functions served by volunteerism – on six motivational functions served by volunteerism. They are:

Values: Volunteerism provides for individuals to express values related to altruistic and humanitarian concerns for others.

Understanding: Volunteering involves the opportunity for volunteerism to permit new learning experiences and the chance to exercise knowledge, skills, and abilities that might otherwise go unpractised. Authors base on the example of volunteers in health and mental health institutions who expected to receive benefits related to self-development, learning, and variety in life through their volunteer service.

Social: Volunteering reflects motivations concerning relationships with others. Volunteering may offer opportunities to be with one's friends or to engage in an activity viewed favorably by important others.

Career: Volunteering is concerned with career-related benefits that may be obtained from participation in volunteer work. Here volunteering is seen as a means of preparing for a new career or of maintaining career-relevant skills.

Protective: Motivations involve processes associated with the functioning of the ego. Volunteerism, may serve to reduce guilt over being more fortunate than others and to address one's own personal problems.

Enhancement: In contrast to the protective function's concern with eliminating negative aspects surrounding the ego, the enhancement function involves a motivational process that centers on the ego's growth and development and involves positive strivings of the ego.

Other researchers also show that motivation for volunteerism can be viewed as a multidimensional construct comprising distinct components (see analysis of autobiographical interviews in Melkman et al., 2015). Wang (2004) uses five-factor dimensionality in the field of sports volunteerism: (1) Altruistic Value, (2) Personal development, (3) Community Concern, (4) Ego Enhancement, and (5) Social Adjustment. Prouteau & Wolff (2008) report that: "In many cases volunteers give several reasons for giving time. Only one fifth of the involvements of all volunteers are motivated by only one goal. This proportion is even lower among the volunteers who are members of their associations, since only one eighth of them are in the same situation. Indeed, 20% of the involvements in both samples are motivated by at least five reasons. Among all volunteers, the desire to be helpful to society and to others is the most frequent motivation reported. It concerns about two thirds of volunteer involvements. The second most important reason is the relational one, which fosters the involvement in six cases out of ten."

Recent studies still relate to the frame of Clary at al. using the six functions of volunteerism (see Guiddi at al. 2015; Finkelstien 2009). But Alexander for example (Alexan-

der et al. 2015) show that a specific additional functions can be observed depending on the concrete realm, such as "Olimpic finction" in their case.

Current Research

The research is based on existing and ongoing volunteer program in Bulgaria ("Refugee project") aimed to facilitate social inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees – children and adults – through education and extracurricular activities using an innovative model of cooperation among volunteers, NGOs and the State Agency for Refugees. The objective is to provide daily, individualized educational assistance and extracurricular activities in the integration centers in Sofia to ease the integration of asylum seekers.

The project is initiated by two non-government organisations – CVS-Bulgaria and Caritas Sofia. Organizers report that since the start in 2010 over 250 volunteers have been involved in the project. Volunteers are facing a complex environment, due to the increasing number of asylum seekers, their different age, educational level and language competences. They spend weekly hours in the centers in direct face-to-face contact with the asylum seekers, conducting regular lessons in Bulgarian language, English language, arts and sports. Also different workshops and events are held (e.g. excursions and visiting museums).

Part of the volunteer workforce for the project is based on NGO international exchange programs so practically many of the volunteers come from different European countries or USA. But coordinators state that there is a trend in the last years more people from the broad public to apply and join the initiative. The recruitment procedure of the project since 2013 included an on-line application form and submission of CV of the candidate. Some of the applicants completed the documents in English and some – in Bulgarian.

Current report is focused on people who applied to volunteer in the program: some demographic parameters were monitored as well as their explicit motivation. All documents and records of data for the survey are analysed and kept in accordance with the Bulgarian Law on protection of personal data.

Method

The profile of applicants is analysed on the basis of 63 submitted application forms, accompanied by Curriculum Vitae for recruitment campaigns from 2013, 2014 and 2015. Descriptive statistics over key characteristics such as gender, age, education, language competencies, work and volunteer experience and source of information are presented and discussed below.

Furthermore a qualitative content analysis on the expressed motives was conducted, as the authentic texts of the participants were segmented and grouped on the basis of the six motivational functions served by volunteerism (Clary at al., 1998). Where content analysis of motives is presented citation of the authentic texts is either direct reproduction of the English version or a translation from a text in Bulgarian.

Profile of applicants for volunteer work with asylum seekers

A total number of 63 online applications for volunteer positions were monitored. Within them 58% female and 5% male candidates.

Their age ranged between 16 and 60 years as the majority were between 25 and 35 years old.

Although it was not required information in the application form, the majority of applicants indicated their nationality in the CV (65,1%). Within them 87,8% indicated Bulgarian nationality, 2,4 % indicated nationality, related to the majour groups of asylum seekers (e.g. Syrian), and 9,8% indicated different nationality.

In general all the applicants were highly-educated – Secondary education was indicated only by the youngest applicants 3.3% (who were still studying at school). All the rest were at least university students. The majority (54,1%) had acquired or studied at the moment for a Master degree. In addition among

Table 2
Groups of applicants by age

Age at the time of applying		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16-20	4	6,3	6,5	6,3
	21-25	15	23,8	24,2	30,6
	26-30	19	30,2	30,6	61,3
	31-35	17	27,0	27,4	88,7
	36-40	5	7,9	8,1	96,8
	41-45	1	1,6	1,6	98,4
	46-50				
	51-55	1	1,6	1,6	100,0
	56-60				
	Total	62	98,4	100,0	
Missing	System	1	1,6		
Total		63	100,0		

Table 3
Number of foreign languages spoken

Number of languages		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	7	11,1	11,1	11,1
	2,00	22	34,9	34,9	46,0
	3,00	17	27,0	27,0	73,0
	4,00	11	17,5	17,5	90,5
	5,00	5	7,9	7,9	98,4
	6,00	1	1,6	1,6	100,0
	Total	63	100,0	100,0	

the applicants there were 4 people (6,6%) who had a doctoral degree or were PhD students at the moment.

Educational profile varied a lot – from Social and Business sciences to Law, IT, Architecture and Engineering. Some of the applicants studied or graduated disciplines directly related to the countries of origin of the asylum seekers – for example Iranian studies, Oriental studies, Arabistics etc.

Candidates had also indicated high levels of language competencies. Most of them knew at least on basic level more than two languages, different from their mother tongue. In the sample 23,8% indicated in their documents certain level of knowledge on languages, potentially spoken by the asylum seekers (e.g. Arabic, Farsi etc.). In some cases it can be interpreted as an indicator for interest ("I just started courses on…") rather than fluent command on the language.

In terms of employment the profile of applicants varied, but the majority were working people (61,9 %) and – not surprisingly – the number of students was relatively high (17,5%). 19% indicated they are unemployed at the moment.

Information in the CVs gave the opportunity to monitor if there is a career path and significant work experience (as a criterion was taken at least two years of work experience). In 62,7% of the cases there were indicator for that. 28,8% of the people were at the beginning of the carrier (first job or work

experience less than two years). Only 8,5% had no work experience at all. This fact is unexpected, having in mind the young age of most of the applicants and the national trends of employment in youth.

Applicants' fields of occupation varied a lot. Their professions represented many different sectors such as Education, IT, PR and Adverisement, Marketing, Finance, Farmacy, Government and NGO sector, etc. There were even people with exotic professions like "belly dancer" or "Kundalini yoga teacher". Part of the people indicated they work as freelancers, own their business or have flexible working time, which gave them the chance to volunteer.

In regards with previous experience, 74,6% of the applicants indicated they had volunteered before. When reading the described activities, it became clear that in many cases people perceive volunteer work in very broad terms – for example as making a donation or support for one time event. One quarter of the applicants indicated that participation in the project will be their first volunteer experience.

Also, most of the people indicated they are experienced in training or education, or have experience in organisation of events. 66,1% described special experience in working with children.

In terms with experience in multicultural surrounding, 81% of the applicants indicated they have such experience. This was not a surprising result, having in mind that many of the people had studied or worked abroad, which was evident from the CVs.

The majority (66,1%) of people actually admitted they had no experience with migrants or refugees before. In some cases applicants explicitly wrote that if approved in the program, this will be their first face-to-face meeting with representatives of these groups. From those who indicated previous experience, there were lots of cases which might be seen as not relevant to the activities and situation in the concrete program.

In the application forms there is a question "How did you find out about this position?" which allows to monitor the sources of information. Without any doubt Internet was the main channel the volunteering option became evident for the applicants. Most of them reported they saw information in Facebook (37,7%), in some cases friend put a post on the applicant's wall and in other the Facebook profile of Refugee Project appeared in the news feed. The second strongest channel for information were personal contacts with volunteers – 18% of the people say they applied after speaking with other volunteers from the project. The other sources mentioned were the mailng lists and websites of the two NGOs, coordinating the project, as well as e-mails from friends and colleagues. Some people indicated they received information from Time Heroes, which is web based platform, dedicated specially on volunteering. We can assume those applicants were already interested or experienced in volunteering when they first met the information about Refugee Project.

Motivation of applicants for volunteer work with asylum seekers

In the application forms of the project there is a special part dedicated to the motivation of the applicant. In the campaigns in 2013

Table 4
Experience in work with migrants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	21	33,3	33,9	33,9
	No	41	65,1	66,1	100,0
	Total	62	98,4	100,0	
Missing	System	1	1,6		
Total		63	100,0		

and 2014 motivation was explored by two questions: "Why did you choose this position?" and "What would like to contribute to the project?". For the campaigns in 2015 the question was reformulated as "Why are you interested in this position?". The applicants could express their motivation in free text with no restrains in formulation or length.

This allowed us to gather authentic material for qualitative content analysis in order to receive a picture of the motivational spectrum connected to volunteering for asylum seekers and refugees is Bulgaria. The six motivational functions served by volunteerism (Clary at al., 1998) were used as a frame for the content analysis.

Texts varied significantly in terms of length and content. In most cases more than one motivational function was found, usually two or three functions were expressed by the applicants.

Values: Examples where volunteering in Refugee Project is seen as an opportunity for individuals to express values related to altruistic and humanitarian concerns for others can be found easily. Central topics here are helping behaviour and doing good ("I simply want to help", "I have always (hopefully) used good chances to help", "Helping the refugees integrate and lead better lives is a cause that is very close to my heart…"). Values, connected to humanitarian work, solidarity and integration of vulnerable groups are frequently expressed.

In one case only religious values were pointed out among the other motives: "My motivation… is also originated on the Christian (Orthodox) values, which I profess".

Understanding function: Many applicants see the volunteering as a learning experience. Main motivators here are definitely *the unfamiliar culture and languages*, brought by the asylum seekers. What is usually seen as a source of fear and social distance, here turns out to be an object of curiosity.

Some people also seek for chance to exercise their knowledge and skills, for example language competencies or expertise in work with children. Only in separate cases other specific skills are mentioned such as "I want to make use of the skills that I have acquired in the field of Information Technology, not only by applying them at work but also by sharing them with other people", also sports, dancing, mathematics.

Social function: Social motives are based on the expectations for building relations with others. Special accent here must be kept on relation with children – almost all of the applicants state in their motivation they find valuable the idea of building relationships with children, especially strong is the image of "refugee children". In some cases the whole motivation of the person is organised around that idea: "Because I like to be in contact with children from the camps.", "I'm interested in the chance of helping children and people in need, and refugees belong exactly to that position. I am also very fond and enthusiastic of working with children, which company I enjoy the most", "I liked the position of volunteer because it is directly related to work with children and I see how this position can help the foundation of close relationship between a child and a teacher…".

Although not with the same strength, the opportunities to be in contact with adults – seen as representatives of different culture or of a vulnerable group (refugees) – are also a motivator. Making new friends and networking with other volunteers is also mentioned. Contacts with representatives of official authorities or the staff of the Centers was not present in any of the texts.

It is very evident that a special source of motivation is volunteering for war refugees from Syria. Other types of asylum seekers are not mentioned. Only in one case applicant speaks about people from Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. In all cases people in the centers are perceived as running away from armed conflict. Economical immigrants are not seen as a motivator or we can assume in some cases they are perceived as one and the same group as the war refugees.

Career function: Examples of career-related benefits that may be obtained from participation in volunteer work are "gaining experience in working with children/people", development of "leadership skills", "teaching

experience". Some applicants refer to their career plans: "I consider pursuing a career in the field of international relations", "I plan to work with children".

In some cases the volunteering itself was in the core of the expressed motivation, for example: "I am about to spend the entire summer in Bulgaria (something that has not happened for such a long time) and my plan was to devote it entirely to volunteering so when I saw your ad I thought this is exactly what I was searching for".

Protective function: This function is related to reduction of negative emotions. In the case of this study sources of such emotions can be seen in two directions – feelings of unfairness (possibly guilt) and fear of war. Elements of the first can be seen in motives like: "I want to help these people if I can, because I know my life is much easier". Fear of war and its consequences is expressed many times: "Nobody is protected from the war. That happened to the Syrian people, but tomorrow it can also happen to us. They went through horrible things, left their home, lost their beloved ones, saw so much death and the only thing that they still have is the hope for better days..."

There are many cases in which applicants describe personal experience, related to the topic of war refugees, which caused negative emotions and compassion: "a month ago I traveled to Lebanon, there I met Syrian refugees working on a building site. While sharing their dinner, this people told me that the scariest taught they have is that a whole generation of young Syrians was robbed of their future. I was deeply touched by this words and I will give my best trying to cherish the curiosity and the will for learning of these children. So that one day they can hold their future in their own hands", "My mother was a migrant many years, so I know what the man in this position needs", etc.

In some cases applicants describe imaginative experience, trying to walk in the shoes of refugees: "I do believe that it is crucial that migrants and particularly refugees receive assistance in their receiving state, as it is out of real threat that they are in this situation, and I believe I would need the same help had I been in their shoes… I cannot even imagine what it means to be a refugee"; "Having experience in living abroad and being in another country far from home and friends I can only speculate what it feels like when the decision to move to another country was not voluntary, but was provoked by the need to escape war and conflict".

Negative emotions are sometimes specially provoked by the work of the official Bulgarian institutions with the asylum seekers. Surprisingly, those sources of motivation vary dramatically from attempts to "repair" what was done by the authorities to the position of pro-active help for the authorities. For example: "I believe that *it was the volunteers who managed to palliate the institutional incapacity and provide the much-needed tangible and social support* to the asylum seekers and refugees in Bulgaria over the past months."[1]; *"Understanding the current challenges faced by the government in managing the increasing number of refugees* coming to Bulgaria, I want to use my free time to help refugee children lead a normal life"[2].

Provoking social change is also a topic that many applicants find as a source of motivation: "It is an act of solidarity and compassion. Helping refugees integrate and be accepted in my country would also allow me to be part of a positive change in our society…"; "I've lived in a more integrated environment and saw first-hand how migrant societies can transform dilapidated neighbourhoods, offer a new perspective to social problems and boost creativity and entrepreneurship". In many cases the desire for social change is directly related to the social attitudes on refugees in Bulgaria: "in Bulgaria people are very biased towards the refugees. They view them as some kind of savages who came here only to

[1] Italics mine.
[2] Italics mine.

bring harm. I live near a refugee centre, and I see that most of these people are normal folks who came here to protect themselves and their families, and I see that they want to settle themselves either here or somewhere else, and just live normal happy lives. They aren't as what they are described to be. It's difficult for them to adapt here because of the language barrier, culture shock and the hostility they feel. By participating in this project I want to help out with what I can, and also show the people around me that they shouldn't fear the refugees. If the people around the volunteers change their view on them, they will change other people's view and this way, step by step, the whole situation for these people will take a turn for the better".

Enhancement: The enhancement function was presented as beliefs that volunteering is connected to the ego's growth and development and involves positive strivings. Examples were found in statements like "I am looking for opportunities to be useful", "Becoming a Volunteer with The Refugee Project will give me the chance to finally pursue my longtime passion of helping other people and fighting injustice. I am so exhausted of working without a cause!". At this area motivation of the applicants also had touch points with the values, protective and the career functions and it was sometimes difficult to separate them.

Discussion

The analysis on the applicants profile showed that the majority of candidates were women with high education, predominantly aged between 25 and 35. These results are consistent with other studies on volunteering (Penner, 2002; Aydinli et al. 2015; partially with Voicu & Voicu, 2009). Carlo et. al. (2005) report that "females had higher prosocial value motives and engaged in volunteer behavior to a greater degree than males". Also, in a study on volunteering in adolescence Cemalcilar (2009) notes "Regarding demographics…, the volunteers in the present study were more likely to be females and younger than non-volunteers".

Further research can indicate if in the case of volunteer work for asylum seekers there are some specifics in the connections between attitudes, education and helping behaviour. Possible directions are also exploring if any political preferences, religious beliefs or ethnical identities are connected to positive attitudes and readiness for helping behaviour towards (potential) immigrants.

In regards of motivation, content analysis shows that all functions of volunteering from the Clary's model are sources of pro-active behaviour. However the values, social function and the protective function seem to be especially strong in our case. In addition there are reasons to suggest the formulation of one more, separate function, related to Social change. In the study this tendency was presented as strong negative emotions, provoked by the status quo (existing attitudes in the society; existing institutional practices etc.), which people connected directly with their pro-active helping behaviour toward asylum seekers.

Questions on the impact of volunteer programs can also be raised. For example Henderson et al. (2012) results illustrate the increased general attraction people seem to experience toward prosocial activities once they are exposed to others who are willing to engage in prosocial behaviour towards outgroup members. Van Goethem et al (2014) report importance of parents' volunteering, friends' volunteering, and civic family orientation on both whether and how often adolescents volunteer. It is interesting if same effects can be observed in the current situation on the Balkans.

The special strength of certain images in the expressed motivation of the applicants (for example the image of refugee children) raises questions related to the media representations of the topic and the content of the advertising campaigns of government and non-government initiatives, related to asylum seekers. In the literature such expectations can be found for example in Turoy-Smith et al. (2013): "The qualitative data also reveal significant wider social and political factors that impact on attitudes. How the media report clearly has

ramifications for prejudice and contact. However, the role of the media in the context of intergroup relations has not been studied extensively… Further research on the relationships between contact, media reporting, prejudice, and their implications could provide important information for changing attitudes". Observations on Bulgarian media can be found in publication of Encheva (Encheva, 2014).

Another lead for further research is related to the strong presence of motives, related particularly to people from Syria. There is a possibility (potential) immigrants and asylum seekers are perceived differently in relation with their country of origin. For example in previous research Lee and Fiske (2006) indicate that: "People perceive immigrants as low in competence and low in warmth (specifically trustworthiness). But perhaps immigrant groups, if specified by originating country, would have received differentiated ratings on these two key dimensions". It is interesting if such phenomena can be observed in the current situation on the Balkans and if so – how it will affect the manifestations of support and helping behaviour towards migrants.

Possible direction is investigating the perceptions of immigrants and asylum seekers by members of the receiving countries (including volunteers) with specific instance of intergroup perception. Based on the Stereotype Content Model (SCM), which posits stereotyping along perceived warmth and competence dimensions (Lee and Fiske, 2006), this can give us view on the influence of different factors like country of origin, family status, gender etc.

Another field of interest are surveys on crossed-categorization and stereotypes, which allow decomposition of the classical tripartite model in the definition of intergroup attitudes: a cognitive, an affective/evaluative, and a behavioural component. In the studies of Echabe & Guede (see Echabe & Guede, 2006) the former two components were differently affected by the crossed-categorization. In terms of application of crossed categorization Prati, F., Crisp, R.J. & Rubini, M. (2015) say that: "A particular type of multiple categorization has proved to be an important way of reducing intergroup bias". In that perspective further studies are needed to provide better understanding of the complex relation between cognitive, evaluative and behavioural elements involved in intergroup dynamics and in particular in the relationship between (potential) immigrants and hosting society.

Limitations

As the presented analysis was conducted on documents that were not specifically designed for research goals, limitations occur. First, some competencies were mentioned as an advantage (not obligatory) in the advertisement for the volunteer position. These were knowledge of foreign languages, especially Arabic and Farsi, experience in work with children and education in the sphere of social work or pedagogics. In this connection we can expect that some of the candidates made explicit and evident in their documents certain aspects of their experience or education.

In connection with motivation, we cannot guarantee that manifested motivation covers the whole spectrum of motivators for volunteers. Different factors can influence this process, such as hidden motives, difficulty to identify or express motives properly, situational factors (in our case – the structure of the application form) etc. Further research with broader samples and more concrete design can indicate the influence of this limitation.

Future implications

As the research niche is relatively new (in their article from 2014 Jones and Williamson state: "This is the first research study examining the roles, motivations and experiences of volunteers who support migrants"), we can expect raise in the interest and social needs related to the topic as the problems of migration are now set strongly in Europe and Asia. Current situation suggests large groups of people will need effective integration in the societies of the host countries and volunteers seems to be among the positive agents who will catalyse this long lasting process.

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