

## COMPARATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTENT ANALYSIS OF COLLECTIVE VICTIMHOOD IN HUNGARIAN NATIONAL NARRATIVES AMONG EMIGRANT AND NON-EMIGRANT GROUPS

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### Abstract

Present research aims to identify narrative markers of victimization comparing narratives of emigrant Hungarians in the UK and non-emigrant Hungarians. 121 interviews were collected and analyzed via automatic content analysis software (NarrCat). 54 non-emigrant Hungarians and 67 emigrant Hungarians participated in our sample (average age: 45.65, 71,5% female). Our research has proven that victimization has narrative markers (low agency and psychological perspective taking and increased amount of negative evaluation) that can be identified in narratives related to individual path and national history. MANOVA analysis showed that more narrative markers of victimization can be found in the narratives of non-emigrants while more agency is observable in the narratives of emigrants. The result of narrative analysis was underlined by the fact that emigration also had significant effect on perceived importance of past victimization. Our conclusion suggests that differences can be observed in the construction of narratives and consequently in the interpretation of perceived collective victim consciousness of emigrant and non-emigrant groups.

**Keywords:** narrative psychology, collective victim consciousness, emigration, agency

### Introduction

In present research we try to identify the signs of collective victimization in individual narratives about national identity and history and make a comparison between two Hungarian subgroups – those who live in the home country, and those who emigrated from Hungary into the United Kingdom in the past years. The UK is facing a serious amount of immigrants from EU countries. Nowadays (besides Germany) the United Kingdom is one of the most popular destination of immigrants from the EU countries (Eurostat 2016). According to the British Statistical Bulletin the number of Hungarian immigrants in the UK is still around 98 000 in 2017.

### National Identity and Collective Victimization

Group memberships have significant effects on our decisions and behaviors and how we look at our environment (Tajfel–Turner 1979; Turner et al 1987). Our national identity is one of our most important social identities that are psychologically affecting and socially consequential (Csepeli 1997).

Roccas (2006) developed a model where in-group identification can be measured with two dimensions: attachment and glorification. Attachment is strongly related to traditional patriotism and emotional commitment toward the group while glorification refers to nationalism – the faith in the superiority of the group (Szabó 2011). Roccas (2008) indicates that these dimensions can be directly proportional which leads

to a homogenous profile, while inverse proportion mean a heterogeneous identification. This scale is validated in 2011 on Hungarian sample by Szabó.

Blanz et al (1998) found out that identity maintenance can manifest in recategorisation with another “superior” group or splitting the group to a superior and inferior part. Low status groups – as Eastern-European national groups in the UK – are more likely to assimilate because the embracement of a national identity with higher prestige will support their self-esteem (Brown, 2000). However in present research we examine the original national identity as long as our participants are first-generation immigrants and left Hungary as adults thus their socialization binds them to their original homeland.

There are certain emotional patterns which can be characterized as dimensions of national identity (Fülöp-László 2011). One of this patterns is collective victim role which is an organic part of Hungarian national identity, but the concept can be expanded and interpreted to other nations who belong to the Eastern-European region, for example Polish people (Bilewitz 2013). Collective victim role can be described as a mental state, characterized by passivity, vulnerability, and feeling of entitlement. Victimized societies or nations tend to believe that they were not capable to avoid the intentional harm-doing of the other group. Bar-Tal (2009) published a research about perceived collective victim consciousness that revealed how intergroup relations are influenced by the subjective experience of collective victimhood. Mészáros (2017) affirms that the relationship of victimized nations with other nations is highly affected by collective victim consciousness on individual level too and can have destructive consequences. The phenomenon of collective victimhood is not typical in every society: it is embedded in history and historical events but its representation reinforces the cognitive and emotional needs of present (László 2003). Collective victim identity can also be inherited by subsequent generations over time (Wohl-Bavel 2011). Not every group (nation) can be described with collective victim beliefs: the source of collective victim consciousness is embedded in history and historical events. These beliefs serve the cognitive and emotional needs of the present of the group (László, 2003). It is not necessary to experience violence firsthand to develop a collective victim consciousness. The consequences of group-identification (Tajfel 1982; Turner et al 1987) and perceived continuity between group members (Sani et al 2007) are enough to perceive trauma as their own despite that trauma was experienced by other people (either in the past or present). Identification has a central role in how relevant past losses and challenges hurt individuals in the present. According to the “master narrative” theory (Hammack 2011) representations about past conflicts embed into social and cultural mechanisms of group identity, thus members learn it during their early socialization. According to László (2005) 68% of Hungarian people mark the Paris Peace Treaty as the greatest tragedy of the Hungarian history. This fits into Volkan’s (2001) “chosen trauma” conception. Csepeli (1992) indicates that the failures that victimize the nation that stands always on the “wrong side” of history are due to their tendency to external attribution which incapacitates self-criticism.

Transfer of victim identity occurs on interpersonal and social-institutionalized level (Olick-Robbins 1998). This latter is related to school education (Adwan 2001; Goodman-Mizrachi 2008; Lomsky-Feder 2004; Tóth-Vincze-László 2006) or commemorations (Khalili 2008) or even political speeches (MacDonald 2003), or literature (Vincze-Kóváriné 2003). On the interpersonal level, the stories of elderly family members and certain objects (Vollhardt 2012) can maintain and transfer the collective trauma to other individuals.

Nevertheless, another approach suggests that collective victimhood as a representation of the past can be reconstructed if the needs of future generations require this change in collective victimhood (Csepeli 1992).

## **Narrative Psychology**

Besides stories can be joyful or give guidance to how to live our lives, the creation of a story includes the experiences of the past and leads to better personal emotional elaboration (Hunt–Hunt 1977). McAdams (2011) explains that in each life narrative there are patterns that reflect on personal identity. He examined identity patterns through empirical data extracted from autobiographical narratives.

In present research design narrative approach was chosen because according to the main concept of scientific narrative psychological approach narratives have such structures and empirical properties that help us capture complex psychological processes and they are related to social identity (László 2005; László 2008). That suggests us that psychological conditions (i.e. emotions, mental states) related to personal and social identity also could be identified in personal narratives, and the aim of the study was to capture collective victimhood as part of individual and collective identity.

The tool used in this research is called “narrative categorical content analysis”, which is a computerized content analytic methodology developed to measure the presence of certain psychological processes (Forgas–Vincze–László 2013). It uses grammatical structures and vocabularies to map – for example – emotions, cognitions and spatio-temporal perspectives in the individual’s narrative – usually in the format of letters, diaries, books or interviews. This method underlined that psychological conditions can be caught by analyzing an individual’s narrative (László 2012).

Present research states that narrators reflect on identity categories showing up in their stories and emotional responses to certain social identity categories can be detected. NarrCat has proven suitable to examine psychological phenomena like trauma-elaboration (Pólya 2004; 2007) or prejudice in intergroup relations (Csertő–László 2011) as it is created to be an instrument for scientific narrative psychological analysis (Ehmann et al 2014).

Agency module consist of active (achieve, do, start, etc.) and passive (sleep, stay, born) verbs, furthermore words related to intention and compulsion. The level of agency in narratives reflects on the perceived effect of an individual has on their environment. It was used in the analysis of historical narratives to explore how individuals see the relations of the their own in-group in contrast to a relevant out-group (Ferenchalmý–Szalai–László 2010).

NarrCat consist of hypermodules as well, which are constructed of general modules (for example psychological perspective hypermodule consists of cognition and emotion modules) (László–Forgas–Vincze 2013). It is defined as an overlap of one’s own self-conception and another person’s imagination (Aron et al 1991; Batson 1994) which becomes the basis of group identity and national identity.

### *Narratives Reflecting National History*

Vincze and Pólya (2007) suggest that the aim of the national narratives is to facilitate historical continuity on both individual and group level and the main function of these narratives is to help the group-members cope with perceived threats. Fülöp and László (2006) also confirm that Hungarian historical experiences are organized along negative

primary emotions. The origin of emotional representations about national history are fear, suffering, anger and pain (Halloran–Kashima 2004).

Numerous research on history textbooks, folk history stories, historical novels and newspaper texts can underline that Hungarian national identity is characterized by traumas, losses, negativity, victimhood and inability to unite (László–Fülöp 2011; László–Szalai–Ferenczhalmy 2010; Mészáros–Szabó 2017; Vincze–Tóth–László 2007). Mészáros and Szabó (2017) suggest that national victimization also has narrative signs: low agency and high rate of passivity. This goes in hand with depressive emotional state where collective victim role causes devaluation of other groups to keep the victim status and avoid responsibility taking.

Vincze and László (2007) suggest that the victimization of the society is materialized partly through Hungarian education: via history books and national commemorations. Mészáros et al (2017) indicate that – non narrative – psychological perspective-taking is more likely to emerge in victimized communities. Staub and Vollhardt (2008) suggest that this is the result of the phenomena we call “altruism born of suffering”, which means that victimized people tend to help other people (members and non-members of the group) in need rather than others. That means a stronger intention to take others’ perspective and a higher level of prosocial behavior mediated by the experienced victimization.

### *Research objectives and hypotheses*

Present research examines the narratives of Hungarian people living in Hungary and compares them with Hungarian people who moved to the UK in the past few years. Until this time narrative markers of victimization have not been examined in context of individual level. The objective of present research is to explore the narrative markers of victimized identity: low agency, negative evaluation and psychological perspective in national narratives of Hungarian individuals. Hungarian adults living in the UK are deprived of this kind of cultural identity transfer and in a foreign environment and culture they are not constantly reminded on the losses the country has suffered by national commemorations from time to time.

In our research we assume that narrative markers of victimization, namely negative evaluation and psychological perspective-taking will decrease in the narratives of emigrants, while the level of agency will be higher. Although there are some evidence that people who tend to emigrate are essentially different than those who do not, Jokela (2014) examined personalities according to the BFQ dimensions, and the results showed that emigrants scored high on openness and extraversion but low on agreeableness. Frieze and Li (2010) affirms that these results underline that migrants can be characterized with novelty-seeking, motivation for results and power and less need for affiliation. Based on this we can also expect higher level of agency and self-directed behavior because of their openness and extraversion (Jokela 2014) and lower perspective-taking (thanks to lower agreeableness) (Frieze–Li 2010).

Secondly we hypothesize that – underlining our narrative investigation – the importance of victimization will be lower in the case of emigrants. Due to the fact that emigrant Hungarians live their everyday lives in a different, non-victimized society, the importance of past victimization decreases, as compared to people living in the home country.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to decide whether environment causes changes in the personality of emigrants or emigration is the result of the already existing differences in their personality – but both options suggest that emigrants construct their

narratives differently, thus narrative markers of victimization will be different in the two subsamples.

## Methods

### *Participants*

Informed consent was obtained from the participants and the study was conducted in compliance with the Ethical Committee's Guidelines. 63 individuals participated in the research, 44.6 % were Hungarian people living in Hungary, the rest (55.4%) were Hungarian people living in the UK (the respondents from the UK live there for 8.95 years in average, but min. 1 year). The mean age of the whole sample was 44.55 years: 49.65 in Hungary (SD=7.98) and 40.65 in the UK (SD=6.6). In the Hungarian sample the gender rate was balanced (42.3% male, 57.7% female), while in the UK sample the proportion of women was much higher (14.7% male, 85.3% female). Only 1.7% of the adult participants finished only elementary school, 20% had a VET school degree, 8.3 % had high school graduation, 50% of the participants had university degree and 10% had postgradual education.

Snowball sampling method was used. The participants were asked to participate via thematic groups of the largest social media site and they registered by filling out a form to participate in the interview.

All of the interviews were collected between July 2017 and June 2018.

### *Instruments and Procedure*

Collective Victim Consciousness Scale (Mészáros 2017) was used to support the results of narrative analysis. Basic psychometrical data of the measured subscales can be viewed in Table 1.

*Table 1. – Basic psychometric data*

Questionnaire	Subscales	Cronbach's Alpha	Hungarian Mean	SD	Hungarian Emigrant Mean	SD
<b>Collective Victim Consciousness Scale</b>		0.733	14.6	6.10	12.0	6.07
No. of subscales measured: 3	Exclusive Victimhood	0.845	18.3	5.87	16.59	6.96
No. of Items: 14	Inclusive Victimhood	0.804	20.29	7.00	14.21	5.69
	Perceived Importance of Past Victimhood	0.724	14.6	6.10	12.0	6.07

*Source: own editing*

All Cronbach alphas were above 0.7 so the consistency of the scales is acceptable.

Semi-structured interviews (see Appendix I.) were conducted and typed. The full text corpus consists of 74 618 words. The average length of the interviews were 872.26 words (SD=922.28 words).

### *Narrative Analysis*

NarrCat software was used for narrative categorical content analysis (László et al 2013). The following modules were used and analyzed in line with the objectives of the research: agency (ratio of active and passive verbs), negative evaluation, psychological perspective.

## **Results**

In the table below descriptive statistics of the measured variables can be seen.

*Table 2. – Descriptive statistics*

Variable	Subgroup name	Hungarian Mean	SD	Hungarian Emigrant Mean	SD
<b>Narrative variables</b>					
	Agency	0.84	0.11	0.91	0.07
	Psychological perspective	21.89	11.43	21.14	10.4
	Negative evaluation	6.54	4.57	5.05	6.61
	Narrative victimization	0.49	1.6	-0.63	1.67

*Source: own editing*

Narrative variables represent relative frequencies (calculated by the number of words in each interview). According to the Shapiro-Wilk normality test our variables – agency, psychological perspective and negative evaluation – are not following normal distribution.

To test the difference between the narratives of emigrants and non-emigrants, we used Multivariate ANOVA. To test our hypotheses we created a variable named “narrative victimization” using narrative variables that we connected to victimization based on previous results (Ferenchalmy–László 2010; Szalai–László 2010; Csertő–László 2011; 2013): agency, psychological perspective and negative evaluation. Firstly these variables were standardized and then the absolute values were summed. MANOVA analysis showed that emigration had a significant effect on narrative construction  $F(55.7727)=7.936$ ,  $p<0.01$  (results of MANOVA analysis can be seen in Appendix 2). Afterwards we checked how emigration effects narrative variables.

According to our first hypothesis agency (ratio of active and passive verbs) is significantly higher in case of emigrants  $F(2,86)=13.805$ ,  $p<0.01$ .

Narrative victimization variable is also significantly affected by emigrant status  $F(2,86)=10.315$ ,  $p<0.01$ . In non-emigrant narratives more victimization was observable.

The result of narrative analysis underlined by the fact that emigration also had significant effect on the Collective Victim Consciousness Questionnaire, especially on the subscale of perceived importance of past victimization of the nation  $F(1,57)=16.73$ ,  $p<0.000$ , where emigrants scored much lower.

## **Discussion**

### *Victimization in Individual Narratives*

Our research aimed to explore that emigration has an impact on the emergence and the importance of past victimization in the survey results and also in the narratives of the participants. Our study found that the individual narratives of emigrant participants can be described with lower level of victimization and higher level of agency. Accordingly, victimization and agency are differently related to the subsamples examined. Although several research (Vincze–László 2007) found that there are specific, narrative markers of victimization, these results were only identified in school books describing historical events. This study contributes to the understanding of how individual narratives represent the collective victim consciousness of the nation and shows the difference that emigration means in this context.

More specifically our research hypothesized that narrative markers of victimization will not likely to be found in the narratives of emigrants, while the level of agency will be higher.

The first question of present research was to explore if the narrative markers of victimized identity – low agency, evaluation and psychological perspective – can be also found in individual national narratives of Hungarian people. According to the results we managed to identify the narrative categories related to victimization (Fülöp–László 2006; Mészáros–Szabó 2017) and – in line with the hypothesis – it was found that emigrant narratives are less victimized and more agent.

Secondly we hypothesized that the importance of victimization will be lower in the case of emigrants. MANOVA analysis showed that there is a difference between emigrants and non-emigrants in the case of the perceived importance of past victimhood.

The higher agency of emigrants can refer to this difference (Szalai–László 2010) or the reason of emigration might have been a kind of agency to change on their lives (Frieze–Li 2010; Jokela 2008). Participants perceive the hosting society as active influencers of their everyday lives, and many of the participants referred to the acquisition of this attitude during the interview (Staub–Vollhardt 2008). Agency seems to be an important category, because it represents the counterpoint of victimized identity. Since victimization is significantly less typical in emigrants' narratives it seems that they refuse to define themselves by historical losses and injustices. The lower importance of past victimhood certifies that victimization is not anymore in the center of their identity (Olick–Robbins 1998). Emigrants are less likely to be exposed to national commemorations and other national cultural transmission contexts and situations, accordingly they are not socialized to victimization (Adwan 2001; Goodman–Mizrachi 2008; Lomsky–Feder 2004; Khalili 2008; MacDonald 2003; Tóth–Vincze–László 2006) or even political speeches (MacDonald 2003).

We verified the narrative markers of victimization on individual level supplemented by survey data in the context of an international study carried out with two non-homogenous groups. Our results confirm previous research on this topic (László–Vincze 2007) that showed that victimization have narrative markers on group-level identity. We can see the convergence on results of narrative analysis of history

books and individual history representations that suggest that our results can be interpreted in general terms, not only on the basis of a specific sample.

Our results underline that victimization is inseparable from the perception of Hungarian cultural identity (Mészáros et al 2017). It seems that victimized identity is an identity category, which Hungarians who consider their national identity important can rely on (László-Fülöp 2011). It is important to note that group-level victimization can be observed in individual narratives, and more importantly that there are individual differences in the way people see intergroup situations or national history. Exploring these patterns can help reducing the negative effects of victimization on individual well-being and in-group identification.

### *Limitations*

It can be presumed that only those people volunteered who consider their Hungarian identity important and who care about belonging to other Hungarians through their memberships of online social media groups.

### **Conclusion**

Our research has proven that victimization has some narrative markers that can be identified in narratives related to individual path and national history. We concluded that narratives of emigrants are created differently as compared to non-emigrants and these narratives can be characterized by lower level of agency and higher level of victimhood. We can summarize that emigration has significant effects on the narrative construction of emigrants.

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# A KOLLEKTÍV ÁLDOZATI TUDAT NARRATÍV MARKEREINEK PSZICHOLÓGIAI TARTALOMELEMZÉSE A MAGYAR NEMZETI NARRATÍVÁKBAN, EMIGRÁNS ÉS NEM EMIGRÁNS CSOPORTOK KÖRÉBEN

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Jelen kutatás célja az áldozattá válás narratív markereinek azonosítása az Egyesült Királyságban élő emigráns magyarok és a Magyarországon élő magyarok elbeszéléseiben. 121 interjút gyűjtöttünk össze és elemeztünk automatikus tartalomelemző szoftverrel (NarrCat). Mintánkban 54 Magyarországon élő és 67 emigráns magyar vizsgálati személy vett részt (átlagéletkor: 45,65 év, 71,5% nő). Kutatásunk bebizonyította, hogy az áldozattá válás narratív markerei (alacsony ágencia és pszichológiai perspektíva-felvétel, és több negatív értékelés) közötti különbségek kimutathatóak a két csoport között, melyek az egyéni életúttal és a nemzeti történelemmel kapcsolatos narratívákban azonosíthatók. A MANOVA-elemzés kimutatta, hogy a Magyarországon élők narratíváiban több, kollektív áldozati tudathoz kapcsolódó narratív marker található, míg a kivándorolt magyarok narratíváiban több ágencia figyelhető meg. A narratív elemzés eredményét alátámasztotta, hogy a két csoport között a múltbeli viktimizáció észlelt fontosságában is különbség van. Következtetésünk arra utal, hogy különbségek figyelhetők meg a narratívák felépítésében és következésképpen az emigráns és nem emigráns csoportok észlelt kollektív áldozati tudatának értelmezésében.

**Kulcsszavak:** narratív pszichológia, kollektív áldozati tudat, emigráció, ágencia

## APPENDIX A

### Demographic data

Sex

Age

Education

### Interview questions

- I. Please, indicate a positive story from your life when it was a good feeling to be Hungarian.
- II. Please, indicate a negative story from your life when it was a particularly bad feeling to be Hungarian.
- III. Please, indicate a story about the most positive event of Hungarian history that had the most positive effect on the nation's members and history.
- IV. Please, indicate a story about the most negative event of Hungarian history that had the most negative effect on the nation's members and history.
- V. Tell me the things Hungarians are famous of. Can you tell a story about how do other nations see Hungarians?
- VI. And what are Hungarians really like?
- VII. Tell me a story about your family and you heard it from your ancestors. Please choose a story which has a deeper meaning for you and defines what kind of person you had become.

## APPENDIX B

Results of multivariate anova:

### Multivariate Tests<sup>a</sup>

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	,004	,167 <sup>b</sup>	2,000	86,000	,846
	Wilks' Lambda	,996	,167 <sup>b</sup>	2,000	86,000	,846
	Hotelling's Trace	,004	,167 <sup>b</sup>	2,000	86,000	,846
	Roy's Largest Root	,004	,167 <sup>b</sup>	2,000	86,000	,846
emigration	Pillai's Trace	,156	7,936 <sup>b</sup>	2,000	86,000	,001
	Wilks' Lambda	,844	7,936 <sup>b</sup>	2,000	86,000	,001
	Hotelling's Trace	,185	7,936 <sup>b</sup>	2,000	86,000	,001
	Roy's Largest Root	,185	7,936 <sup>b</sup>	2,000	86,000	,001

a. Design: Intercept + emigration

b. Exact statistic

### Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	victimization	27,478 <sup>a</sup>	1	27,478	10,315	,002
	Zscore(agency)	12,154 <sup>b</sup>	1	12,154	13,805	,000
Intercept	victimization	,409	1	,409	,154	,696
	Zscore(agency)	,287	1	,287	,326	,570
emigration	victimization	27,478	1	27,478	10,315	,002
	Zscore(agency)	12,154	1	12,154	13,805	,000
Error	victimization	231,752	87	2,664		
	Zscore(agency)	76,595	87	,880		
Total	victimization	259,291	89			
	Zscore(agency)	88,752	89			
Corrected Total	victimization	259,230	88			
	Zscore(agency)	88,749	88			

a. R Squared = ,106 (Adjusted R Squared = ,096)

b. R Squared = ,137 (Adjusted R Squared = ,127)