

**„YOU DO IT QUIETLY, YOU HELP AND THAT'S IT.”
THE EXPERIENCE OF VOLUNTEERING THROUGH A CASE EXAMPLE**

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Abstract

The largest population movement in the history of Europe since the Second World War has been the migration process of recent years, which also appeared in Hungary in 2015. The significant demographic movement has resulted in important social reactions and has developed different narratives in the civil and also in the power fields. In Hungary, the refugee issue has become a decisive topic of political discourse since 2015, and the party coalition was among the first in Europe to represent the security policy. As a result, the refugees appeared as a source of danger, so the government has rejected them. In spite of this, the grassroots volunteer groups were organized in the civil sphere, who helped the refugee masses passing through Hungary in 2015. This paper analyses a very brief but very intense manifestation of Hungarian civil society involvement as a social response to current conflicts. We will look at how the 2015 migration wave grassroots crisis management took place in Debrecen. This cultural anthropological research is based on online and offline participatory observations and semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with volunteers who helped refugees in Debrecen. This study focuses on the motivations, attitudes, social responsibility of volunteers and their voluntary activity embedded in broader socio-political conditions. The first part of the article shows the formation and operational peculiarities of solidarity philanthropic organization with refugees in Debrecen. Then follows the individual aspects of volunteering. Finally, it will be discussed the socio-political context of the civil voluntary movement, the political interpretations of refugee assistance and its impact on volunteering. With outlining a segment of the contemporary volunteer phenomenon we can get closer to provide a framework for understanding the possibilities of the recent civil sphere.

Keywords: contemporary volunteering, grassroots, civil sphere, social participation, philanthropy, helping refugees

Discipline: cultural anthropology, ethnography

Absztrakt

„CSEENDBEN MEGCSINÁLOD, SEGÍTESZ, ÉS KÉSZ.” AZ ÖNKÉNTESSEG TAPASZTALATA EGY ESETPÉLDÁN KERESZTÜL

A második világháború óta Európa történetének legnagyobb népességmozgása az elmúlt évek népvándorlási folyamata, amely 2015-ben tetőzött és Magyarországon is megjelent. A nagy mértékű demográfiai mozgás jelentős társadalmi reakciókat váltott ki, és eltérő narratívákat alakított ki a civil, illetve az hatalmi szférában is. Magyarországon a menekültkérdés 2015 óta a politikai diskurzus meghatározó témája, a regnáló kormány pedig Európában az elsők között képviselte a biztonsági kérdéseket firtató politikát. Ennek eredményeként a menekültek veszélyforrásként jelentek meg, ezért a kormány elutasította őket. Ennek ellenére a civil szférában létrejöttek az alulról szerveződő önkéntes csoportok, akik 2015-ben segítették a Magyarországon áthaladó menekültek tömegeit. A tanulmány a magyar civil társadalom szerepvállalásának egy nagyon rövid, de nagyon intenzív megnyilvánulását elemzi, mint a kortárs konfliktusokra adott társadalmi választ. Választ kapunk arra, hogyan zajlott a 2015-ös migrációs hullám civil válságkezelés Debrecenben. A kulturális antropológiai kutatás online és offline részvevőmegfigyeléseken, valamint a debreceni menekülteket segítő önkéntesekkel készített félig strukturált interjúkon és kötetlen beszélgetéseken alapul. A tanulmány az önkéntesek motivációira, attitűdjére, társadalmi felelősség-vállalására és tágabb társadalmi-politikai feltételekbe ágyazott önkéntes tevékenységére összpontosít. A cikk első része a debreceni menekülteket segítő önkéntes szerveződés szervezet kialakulását és működési sajátosságait mutatja be. A második részben az önkéntesség egyéni vonatkozásait járjuk körül. Végül szó lesz a vizsgált önkéntesség társadalmi-politikai kontextusáról, a menekültek segítésének politikai értelmezéséről, és annak az önkéntességre gyakorolt hatásáról. A kortárs önkéntes jelenség egy szegmensének felvázolásával közelebb kerülhetünk a kortárs civil szféra működésének megértéséhez.

Kulcsszavak: kortárs önkéntesség, alulról szerveződő önkéntesség, civil szféra, társadalmi részvétel, jótékonykodás, menekültek segítése

Diszciplína: kulturális antropológia, néprajz

The migration wave of 2015 is without a doubt one of the most decisive social phenomena for Europe and within Hungary in the first decades of the 21st century. It was the largest population movement in the history of Europe since the Second World War. In this year, more than 400,000 immigrants arrived in Hungary, of which 177,000 registered as asylum seeker (KSH, 2016. 3), and there was more than 220,000 people, who did not register, so according to the legal system, they were illegal immigrants. The issue of immigration was already present as a significant issue among the European Union and its member states, however, the wave of migration that peaked in 2015 was an unprecedented phenomenon in individual countries. We can say that it was

unprecedented in its magnitude, mode of operation, and composition, which generated significant and multifaceted challenges for the whole of Europe. (Bernáth, Kertész & Tóth 2016:288) Its complex effects extended on a macro level to the social, economic, political and civil spheres as well as to the ordinary phenomena of individual life. In Hungarian society, we can see the wave of migration as a 'sudden injury' that activated and intensified the already existing differences of opinion, conflicts and caused the development of new fears. (McAdam, 1994.)

In Hungary, the refugee issue has become a decisive topic of political discourse since 2015, and the party coalition was among the first in Europe to represent the security policy (Feischmidt, 2018).

72; Szalai & Góbl, 2015: 2). As a result, the refugees appeared as a source of danger, so the government has rejected them. Comment: it is necessary to conceptualize the word „refugee” in the context of the present article. There is a fundamental difference between the useage of migrants and refugees in the press, the media, in public speeches and the public thinking. Although the two notions refer to the same group - a mass of people who have been come from war zones, especially from the Middle East - the two names express different attitudes and interpretations in the discourse. The term refugee emphasizes the need, referring to the difficult situation of those who are fleeing from the war. In contrast, the term migrant focusing on the capability of territorial mobility, and thus describes migrant masses as non-vulnerable people, but as an equal rival for the area and the cultural goods. In Hungary, the various social interpretations of migration have been structured along the lines of a refugee or migrant approach. The former was typically used by representatives of a positive, accepting attitude, while the latter expressed negative attitudes and rejection. As the present article using emic research method, it follows the interpretation and the concepts of the investigated volunteers, who used the definition of refugee.

So, on the one hand, a narrative rejecting refugees was formed and xenophobia showed a growing tendency, on the other hand, solidarity towards immigrants also appeared and a voluntary movement was created to help refugees. (Simonovits & Bernát 2016: 41–47.; Feischmidt 2016: 6.; Simonovits, 2016: 54.; Mikecz 2020)

In the humanitarian assistance provided to the refugees, the official civil organizations that had already been active participated to a lesser extent, but to a much greater extent the newly activated, grassroots informal civil groups. Their activities provided basic social care and assistance to refugees arriving in the country and intending to travel through it. Civil assistance took place in two main areas. On the one hand, in the southern border areas of the country, where the refugees arrived in the territory of Hungary. On the other

hand, in settlements involved in the administration of refugees and the temporary accommodation of their requests, primarily in large cities that play a significant role in rail transport.

The present study: 1) analyzes the motivation, attitude and social responsibility of the volunteers of Debrecen who assisted refugees in 2015, 2) as well as the broader socio-political interpretation and framework of this voluntary activity, and 3) its relations and impact on their activities. The aim is to understand the intention of migration aid and solidarity in the context of the secularized contemporary Hungary. Through empirical research on volunteering in Debrecen, we would like to introduce the phenomenon of contemporary volunteering that could combine individual and group-level aspects.

Methods

This article speaks about partial results of a longer cultural-anthropological research which took place among the volunteers who helped the refugees in Debrecen between 2015 and 2020. Now, we focus on a shorter period, from August 2015 to February 2016 when we analyze the events during and after the helping for refugees among the group of 25-30 members. In the methodological planning of the present researchbit was a hardship to reach one comprehensive approach. I wanted to examine the broad socio-political framework of the activities of volunteers assisting refugees, but also their personal attitudes and motivations. To achieve these research goals, the investigations in the physical space were not enough. The direction of the research required the follow-up of processes taking place on virtual surfaces. Therefore, the process required a flexible methodology that could capture overall contemporary social phenomena and could provide a comprehensive framework for interpreting people, objects, ideas and information in the social sphere (Falzon, 2009: 3–6). Based on the concept of postmodern anthropological research, I followed the theory of George E. Marcus, the multi-sited ethnography, which allows the

researcher to allocate the research field by the volunteers own actions (Marcus, 1995:108, 1986: 165-193, Lajos, 2015: 163-172). As several researchers emphasize about phenomenon which took place in offline and online spaces at the same time, understanding is possible through the simultaneous analysis of the two practices. (Hine, 2000: 39; Lovas Kiss, 2017: 239-257.). The focus of this study is the perspective of the volunteers, which is why I try to explore the characteristics of contemporary, informal volunteering from an emic point of view, and through a case example. Therefore, I conducted participant observation offline and online, I made semi-structured interviews, focus group, and informal conversations with the volunteers.

Background: Voluntary aid for refugees in Debrecen

The humanitarian crisis that emerged during 2015, migration wave mobilized a part of the Hungarian society, resulting in a voluntary movement (Bernát, Kertész & Tóth, 2016 287). This movement based on already existing and official civil organizations and newly-established, informal grassroots groups. Their activity was aimed to provide acute, basic social assistance and aid to refugees arriving in the country and intending to travel through it. Assistance was provided both in the southern border areas of the country and in those settlements that were affected by the 'dispensation' of refugees, mainly in major cities that play a significant role in rail transport, like Szeged, Pécs, Budapest, Debrecen or Cegléd.

At the time of the migration crisis, the mass of refugees accumulated in railway stations in need of information and supply. The difficult situation emerged the earliest in the southern part of the country. In Szeged, a group of civic volunteers instantly organized, called themselves Migszol. A few days later it was followed by the organization, Migration Aid made by voluntarily citizens from Budapest and then the formation of '*Segítsünk együtt a menekülteknek*' (*Help together to the refugees*). In the last days of June 2015, the Debrecen volunteers

began to organize themselves in parallel with Budapest. The reason for this instant response was that at that time there was a refugee camp in Debrecen, which played an important role in the placement, registration, and assessment of refugee status of migrants arriving in Hungary. As a result of the refugees who appeared in the physical spaces of Debrecen, public discourse started about them in the social space of the city. The first documented traces of this can be found in the virtual space. The establishment of the Migration Aid Group of Debrecen took place on the interface of Facebook, similarly to other groups of Hungarian and international grassroots for refugees (Dalota & Schrape, 2014). Their members acted parallel in offline and online spaces. The physical location of their work was provided by the railway station in Debrecen, but the organization, collection of donations and communication with each other happened on Facebook.

On online social media platforms, people have used community-based functions to organize volunteering, share experiences, and guide refugees, but in the case of the refugee crisis of 2015 in Hungary, it happened without any earlier precedent (Mikecz, 2007; Dalota & Schrape, 2014). At the same time, the novelty of this networking is questionable, as they "only" use a new platform, provided by social media, to communicate their activities. Like any other initiative or "business", volunteers used the relationship between their own acquaintances and their relations through sharing (Kaun & Uldam, 2018).

The volunteer group in Debrecen, dated the beginning of their activity from June 28, 2015, until the 15th of September, when the first part of the border fence was built on the Hungarian-Serbian border. This was the active and dynamic period when the volunteers were present at the Debrecen railway station on a daily basis and provided indispensable supply on average of 100-200 refugees per day. Most of them were there from 18 o'clock until midnight, and later for more longer, until half past 3, as that was the time period when the refugees had arrived at the Debrecen site or went on to continue their journey. Around the end

of the summer, as the migration crisis increased, the work of the volunteers became necessary even during the day. Volunteers had organized their activities: they divided their work into "shifts" that adopted the schedule of the trains used by refugees to go to Budapest. The last train departed at 8 pm and the first at 3 pm. Refugees could leave the Debrecen camp only around 8 pm, therefore they usually missed the last train and they were obliged to spend the night in the railway station until the first train arrived. Volunteers tried to be there with them, to help in this situation full of problems and conflicts.

The volunteers had basically four main tasks at the station: "placcos"/ donor; "vágányos"/ trackway; escort; coordinator. The description of these tasks and the expected competencies are included in the Debrecen volunteers' rule guide - which has been made after the experiences of the first few weeks. These policies include, but are not limited to, the following:

"1. placcos / donor: distribution of water, food, clothing, toys, and toiletries. It does not require language skills, but it does require constant attention. Realistic needs must be fulfilled, meanwhile, they have to take care of the donations.

2. vágányos / trackway: The task is to welcome new arrivals at the station. Language skills are essential, as well as good communication skills to gain the trust of the arrivals quickly.

3. escort: Escort the refugee to the bus, to the toilet, to the store, to the traffic. You don't necessarily need language skills, but if you don't speak languages, be sure to ask your partner for help before you accompany him/her anywhere."

The policy was written to inform new members, not to formalize the work. Therefore, it did not include the description of the fourth, coordinating position. The coordinating position required the ability to review the work of volunteers, so it could only be done by "experienced" volunteers, who also provided one of the three tasks above, so the coordinator was not an independent, named role.

The activities of the volunteers were spontaneously organized within a few weeks. Their rules and the system of their activities have been developed: 1) on the basis of their own

experiences, 2) by the events in the railway station, and 3) with the help of other voluntary groups (primarily the Migration Aid in Budapest). Their work was a fine example of spontaneous organization. Individuals who did not know each other before (apart from one or two exceptions), were able to collaborate effectively, organized their joint activities, turned to each other with confidence and worked together for each other. In order to work more efficiently, they started to organize daily schedules, appointed shift managers from permanent members to lead the operational team. The allocation, like all other logistical things, was discussed on the Facebook group, as even the most active "hardcore" (5-10 people) was never present at the same place and at the same time. The virtual space of social media was also suitable not only for organizing meetings and coordinating but to keep in touch with other volunteer groups of other cities as well as organizing fundraising. The four roles of the physical space have also been reproduced on the online interface, as those who regularly manage and coordinate tasks at the station had administrative access to the Facebook group. *"Facebook had a great role to play as we do not need to make phone calls for money. And also, fundraising or asking for help was quite effective as well. If you share a post every half an hour, you will experience that more people will give donations. But if you miss a half day, no one brought. [...]and that's what we had to update, that today we need water, tomorrow's we need an apple, or this or that, or not to bring this because we don't have storage, so it was important not to have any unnecessary donation."* (A.C. man, volunteer)

The interaction between social media sites and civic participation has happened in Hungary in an unprecedented way in the case of refugee volunteers. For the more effective coordination, a hotline has developed among the volunteer groups of different cities involved in refugee aid. The free and independent communication channels of online spaces made it possible for the volunteers of Debrecen to get information about those refugees who departed from Budapest. By this information exchange between Debrecen and the capital made possible for the volunteers to prepare for the

various needs of the arriving refugees during this one-and-a-half-hour long train journey. *"So the role of the Internet was essential, all the info flow through it, there were millions of chat windows, separate for each volunteer groups in every city, and then there was fresh info in those about how many people were transported like we knew there were 5 wagons, and it is around 400 people, who need water, food. And then we had to purchase it quickly until they arrived. We put a post on Facebook in the afternoon about what would we needed, and until 8 pm we got them. This online space was incredible, I mean the Facebook, to experience the power it has."* (K. F. woman, volunteer).

This practice of sharing information in real-time among volunteer groups was a key factor. On the one hand, to receive targeted donations in the absence of larger-capacity storages (Kaun & Uldam, 2018), and on the other hand, to inform volunteers with special skills about their tasks, e.g. if there were more injured among refugees, the locals tried to mobilize more volunteers with medical experience.

In addition, sometimes the police and the staff of MÁV (Hungarian State Railways) were prepared to a large number of people arriving on the basis of current volunteer road information. *"Once there was a big football match in Pest, hence the Eastern railway station was evacuated. And then suddenly hundreds of people were sent to Debrecen. They were given separate wagons. But no one announced officially to the director of the station, no one knew. And then the news came onto the phone, it was a sort of "road info" Messenger group, me and another person were from Debrecen, some from Cegléd and Szeged and some from Pest. I had internet on my phone, so the news came to me. Many people came and we knew how much. I told the police and I called the station chief that there is a train which just arriving now to Cegléd where the last two wagons are full of refugees."* (A. T. woman, volunteer).

Direct and real-time communication between volunteer groups and access to mobile devices had been a huge help in family reunification. *"There was a problem that one of the dads told me to help him because when there was a big police raid at Keleti railway station he was there with his wife and his 4 or 5 children. He went to the internet cafe to charge his phone, and in the meantime,*

the cops were caught him and put him on a train to sent Debrecen. His family stayed there without a phone. So, I told this to the volunteers from Budapest about this man who had no idea where he is. He said that there was a big door, a staircase, and we tried to figure out where his family might be. I took a picture of the dad, sent it to the volunteers of Pest, told them which train he will arrive, and they were waiting for him, and the next day I saw a photo of him with his family, they found them. There were many of them. We had such a line of "family reunion". There were several cases like this. We photographed them, their papers, and sent them to the (volunteer- editor) group in the town where they last had their family." (A. T. woman, volunteer).

By communicating the meaning and importance of migration aid to the outside world, social media also ensured the legitimacy of the activity. Facebook played a key role in recruiting volunteers and helped new members to join. The Facebook group had a low entry and exit threshold, thus it was a short-term commitment. It had the great advantage to offer a wide and personalized repertoire of support activities. In addition to participation or donation, the volunteers also appreciated if someone shared their online donation on their own page and added their friends to potential donors/volunteers. Social media also provided a formal framework for volunteer organizations. At first, it was only a loose form of relationship that demonstrated the individual and informal nature of the organization. Contemporary social movements are characterized by the fact that online entry replaces the connection or is equivalent to a "real" connection. (Mikecz, 2007. 79). *"The Migration Aid of Pest was official, we were not an official organization, we had a Facebook group and if someone was a member of it, we thought it was a member of Migration Aid Debrecen. There was nothing formal, we only wore one badge at the station, the Migration Aid logo, we wore that."* (Zs.J. woman, volunteer).

According to the researchers of contemporary social organizations, the usage of the Internet could create conditions for the emergence of new forms of collective behavior and action. In this discourse, online technologies appear as a tool to enhance and strengthen new forms of relationships. According to the theory of

technology-mediated social participation (TMSP Kraut, 2010; Shneiderman, 2011), opportunities offered by online spaces are the key to coordinating certain phenomena, which means that certain events could not make happen in without social media features. The Internet not only provides surface and infrastructure for already existing communities, but the technological innovations are present as "actors" that define and structure the foundations of community organization (Dalota & Schrape, 2014; Shneiderman, 2011; Mikecz, 2007; Kraut, 2010). In the case of volunteers assisting refugees in Debrecen, we can see how the virtual space provided not only an infrastructure fund but the opportunities provided by the Internet actively shaped and influenced the nature of the volunteers' activities.

The social media has played a key role in four areas: 1) the formation and operation of a voluntary group; 2) mobilization (involving volunteers, fundraising); 3) communication between participating actors at national level (enabling real-time information flow, coordinating refugees, sharing experiences and sharing good practices); 4) communicating for the public, highlighting and emphasizing the importance of the matter outwardly at individual and community level. Facebook was so decisive that volunteers thought their formation could come to happen without the social media interface: *"The whole thing started from Facebook: if it had not been, then we couldn't find each other [...] then we wouldn't start helping them - for the refugees (ed.)."* (K. F. woman, volunteer).

In their study, Bernát, Kertész and Tóth (2016, 289) also argue that Facebook is a key factor in the development of solidarity groups with refugees.

However, the loose, informal group based on the voluntarily work of individuals who organized spontaneously and autonomously inefficiently tried to institutionalize themselves. There were several factors behind this failure. On the one hand, the shortage of the time period was an important reason, as the migration wave itself and the intense volunteering that followed it took only three months. Due to official state regulations, the

construction of the southern border line and the rejection of the reception of refugees, the number of migrants arriving in the country has drastically decreased, hence the need for support had become also unnecessary. After the "disappearance" of refugees, the aid had become obsolete in Debrecen. Volunteers have experienced the disappearance of their work as a lack, but many of them have tried to channel their charity activities into other areas, helping other needy groups (homeless, poor, minority). On the other hand, it had become a source of problems that by institutionalization, an informal hierarchy had emerged within the group. Several members of the originally peer-to-peer organization were annoyed by the emergence of formalized executive status that has been articulated in the meantime. Many have criticized the position of the self-proclaimed leaders and therefore had left the group. There were several alternatives to the leadership role that led to a sort of competition. Because of this internal conflict, disappointed group members had created another Facebook group under the similar name as the previous one. (The membership of the two communities today is almost the same.) Finally, the individual ideas, motivations, and intentions of civilians who were active in volunteering were very diverse. They choose different individual strategies to assist refugees and to help other target groups.

Contemporary Volunteering

To understand the perspectives of the volunteers, we have to take a quick look to the contemporary volunteering theories. As a result of the growing individualism of the late modernity, we have to ask the question: how the altruistic attitude, to help others, can be reconciled with that individualistic approach that focuses on the person, not on the community. Robert D. Putnam argues in favor of incompatibility and sees the gradual disappearance of charitable actions as a result of the extreme focus on self-interest. (Putnam, 2000). This idea represents a sort of turning away from the community, and hence the disappearance of most

motivations in helping. However, according to several other researchers, this is a far too simplistic approach (Wuthnow, 1991, 1995; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Wilson, 2000). The concept of "altruistic individualism" by Ulrich Beck emphasizes the new role of volunteering. According to this approach, voluntarily work do not vanish as a social phenomenon, however, the motivation for philanthropy have become individualistic, as a tool for self-fulfillment (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) Hustinx and Lammertyn break down volunteering and charity into collective and reflexive motivations. In collective case, charity is a result of some kind of commitment, as collective motivations integrated into the community by common values (these are typically religious communities). Here, the interests of the group are more decisive than individual motives, and also, this form requires a long-term commitment.

The approach of reflexive volunteering is something completely different. In this, community framework conditions are less determined and it rather reflects on the appreciation of the individual from a late modernist point of view.

It is characterized by mostly the emphasis on self-interest. Motives for charitable actions are plural. Individual interpretations and values define the direction of solidarity, the scope of the recipient, and the nature of the activity. Long-term commitment is less important in this form, but rather the lack of continuity and interruption is dominant (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003: 173-174; Fényes & Kiss, 2011: 41-42). Criticism against Hustinx's and Lammertyn's theory suggests that their dichotomous motivation model presupposes some kind of implicit exclusivity, while late-modern forms of help are characterized by the simultaneous and concurrent presence of collective and reflexive traits (Zakariás, 2016: 22). At the same time, research on egoistic and altruistic motivations has concluded that the motivation of volunteering is not influencing the act itself by, so their artificial separation is questionable even on a theoretical level (Veludo-de-Oliveira, Pallister & Foxall, 2015).

The individual perspectives of volunteers

We could get closer to understanding the attitude of volunteering by portraying the members of the Debrecen volunteer group which contained nearly 25-30 members. The global tendency of supporting people in need is that mainly intellectuals and professionals are involved in solidarity with refugees (Simonovits & Bernát, 2016, 105). Also, in the summer of 2015, there were professionals among the volunteers at the railway station in Debrecen: social workers, sociologist-psychologists, asylum interpreters and doctors. In the interviews, they all reported on the use of their professional knowledge in volunteering. The following interview section discusses the use of professional skills of a person with a psychologist-sociologist qualification. *"A 16-year-old Afghan girl came to me, and with her broken English, she asked me for medicine to kill herself. I have moved aside with her, which might have been a mistake because we were few for too many people, but I felt I could not leave here in the state like this. We had a one-and-a-half hour talk about how to find the handrails in her life that could help her. She was a 16-year-old refugee, an abused girl, but I tried to make it. I don't know if I could do anything at that time, but I hope she got an impulse that help her to continue."* (K.F., woman, volunteer).

During the development of the volunteer work, everyone tried to get involved in those areas that are most appropriate to their personality and professional knowledge. There were also some people who had had about ethnic and /or religious involvement (sameing). (Feischmidt: 2018) They were mostly foreign students of the University of Debrecen who came from Middle Eastern countries. They could contribute to the assistance with interpreting. Many of them, as medical students, also used their professional knowledge, and those who had better financial status also helped migrants in need. In the context of voluntarily work, even leisure time had become an important and useful capital. Since the vast majority of the volunteers had to be at their workplace during the day, the role of those teachers who had their summer holidays was substantial. They had the time to deal with

unexpected tasks and problematic situations during the day. The philanthropic activity required to reconsider creatively the resources of the support work. For example, an owner of an antique shop had capital in the form of the free space of his shop. Therefore, he could ensure a place for charity and for the reception of the donations.

An important criterion for becoming a volunteer is the existence of some sort of competencies, but many relevant anthropological literatures and my own experiences point out that the personal life experiences of the volunteers are more decisive. In the model of reflexive volunteering, by Robert Whutnow, he emphasizes that the narrative of individual life events serves as justification for helper activity and leading to philanthropic actions (Whutnow, 1995). Zakariás (2016, 2018) draws attention to the fact that when volunteers present their work, they never describe only certain situations, but they embedding their helping acts into a series of events that takes place in the individual life story. It composes the identity of the speaker and also, a sort of "volunteer self".

In the interviews, it is also observable how the volunteers have created a sort of implicitly moralizing narratives, and how they interpret their previous experiences and socialization patterns that initiated their work with refugees. Below, I present some parts of longer interviews to illustrate these narratives. *"Maybe my special personal background has paved my way in my life. My family environment, because I come from a protestant family, my father, and one of my brothers are pastors. They regularly gave support to the needy, for decades. So I saw this, but I myself didn't take part in it, but probably I couldn't avoid my fate! ... Then, people started to ask me to help in different places, time to time and I looked for other people's help until I realized that actually, I am the one who could help. So 1-2 years ago I started: I set up an aid team to help people in need, especially to Roma people [...] Then the refugee crisis arise. Suddenly tons of news was about them, that they come to Hungary, that it is a crisis, and that they come to Debrecen or that they are passing through the city as well, and I understood as these people who need help! I also realized that this is a historical situation now, not yesterday, not tomorrow, it is absolutely actual. For me, it was definitely*

natural that I have to go, help, and let's see where what." (Zs. J., woman, volunteer).

"Volunteering, it has always been, since my high school years. It has a tradition within the family, my mom is a nurse, a mental hygiene specialist, I got these impulses from her. As a small child, I get used that my mother is only once a night at home during the week, because she is attended a mental emergency service - voluntarily. Certainly, this pattern, the effect of my mom, is left a mark in my career choices and volunteering. [...] In fact, I started to deal with the issue more seriously when I was 15-16 years old, so I started working as a volunteer with disabled people. [...] Since then, the target group has changed, but my intentions are not. [...] During my sociology studies, I was a volunteer in a refugee camp for one and a half years. It was around 2005-2006, and I worked with adults and children, several times a week. [...] and I heard from someone that there is an opportunity again for volunteering, and at that time I was not worked anywhere, so I said, well, let's try it! [...] And then, with the refugee wave in the summer, I reintroduced myself very intensively into the refugee aid." (K.F., woman, volunteer).

However, after they enumerate their previous experiences, each interviewee emphasized the uniqueness of the present refugee crisis and its unprecedented nature in their life history. The intensity and emotional saturation of these events had a profound effect on the volunteers. Although they had confronted with some tragic situations, they have played an active and potent role in them. In their recollections and subsequent conclusions they considered this period as a stage of their life full with experiences, and they also often articulated the benevolent effects of events on their own lives. *"It was the most beautiful summer of our life!"* (H.T., woman, volunteer). *"These are experiences that you couldn't miss! You stepped over your own boundaries in these situations!"* (K.F., woman, volunteer).

In spite of the difficulties and the very intense tasks that the volunteers had to face with, most of them experienced their night-time shifts as a spiritual recharge, in which the individuals felt their own importance and also the feeling of belonging to the group was decisive. *"It's very interesting that I didn't feel tired. It really was, quite often, that two-three of us stayed there (till dawn - ed.) for half-past three [...], so*

to not delay the train, (the refugees - ed.) we stayed with poor things. We might have gone because they wouldn't be late, or if they were delayed, they would go by the next. But I think it was also a matter of not having to go home ... to stay there. [...] There was 3 o'clock in the morning when I got home, and then I was so energetic that I often spent another hour, chatting online with the others, to discuss what we did that day etc., I fell asleep at 4 and rise at seven. And this happened several times. But I didn't feel tired. I was obviously tired physically, but spiritually or I don't know how I was balanced." (Á.C., man, volunteer).

In most of the cases, volunteering described as a process of self-realization that enables the person to gain more comprehensive self-knowledge. Parallel to this, the volunteers formulate the importance and the meanings of their work in regard their own lives: *"For me, this is a need, I cannot live without helping people, if I can give to others, then I give. [...] Volunteering is an attitude towards the world. It is also a personality trait, and obviously, my profession is in it, but it has a deeper root. What exactly does volunteering mean to me? It was always obvious that I have to do it!"* (K.F., woman, volunteer).

"Volunteering is a feeling. Sometimes we talk to about it with the group members, that somehow this is what makes us alive! So it produces some sort of happiness hormone, or I don't know what's in it, but really. One cannot wait for the next dose, for the next time to go. For me, it is a kind of life elixir." (Zs. J., woman, volunteer).

Volunteering, as it was represented in this study, is like a cathartic experience in the life of the volunteers, full of emotions and success. However, this volunteering self collapses after 2015, when the southern border line had made and as a result of the wave of refugees gradually dries up inside Hungary. As I mentioned earlier, the first part of the southern border, which was built on 15 September 2015, stopped those refugees who had previously been driven through Debrecen. Since then, Debrecen has been eliminated from the blood circulation of refugee supply and reception in Hungary, so the activities of the volunteers have become unnecessary so far. The emotional involvement can be felt also at the end of the process, or perhaps even more dramatically. In their narratives, volunteers emphasized emptiness,

mourn, and addiction: *"The refugees disappeared very sudden, I know that was 15 (September - ed.), Tuesday, and on the last Sunday I was at the station. It ended so suddenly, they came on Sunday, but on Tuesday nothing. And I had withdrawal symptoms around 6 in the afternoon, like now you don't have to go or what?!"* (Á.C., woman, volunteer). Thus, the "disappearance" of refugees created a new situation, accompanied by another narrative making process by the volunteers. Many questions have arisen with many different coping mechanisms: Do we need, and if so, how should philanthropic volunteering continue? Who should be the new recipients of this help? Has it been a joint action or remain within individual frameworks? If the group form remains, what role does the organization play in local civil society? Should they continue in an informal or in an institutional setting? These questions have led to the redefinition of the group and individual volunteering, with diverse individual and group strategies. The investigated volunteers tried to continue the helping work in the post-migration period. As part of this, they help other needy groups, typically local homeless people, poor families, people living in minority life.

Changes in the position of the Hungarian civil sphere since the regime change

"Whether it is about ideas, actions, practices, aid is a social construction: the interactions between the participants' ideas, actions, and the social context." (Zakariás, 2016: 9) Philanthropist volunteers are actors who maintain interaction with disadvantaged social groups and seek to mobilize resources and to solve the everyday problems of those in need. They generate civic dialogue on social issues, hence draw attention to the difficult situation of those in need. Through their activities, they are actors in democratic political processes, even if their field of operation is outside of the political scene (Arató & Mikecz, 2015: 307). Thus, I see expedient to link the study of the phenomenon of contemporary volunteering to the Hungarian civil sphere. In order to create a framework for interpretation, I will briefly mention

some of the characteristics of the Hungarian civil sphere since the change of regime.

In 1989, during the regime change, the role of the civilian sphere was key, it acted as a sort of engine of the political transformation. At the end of the 1980s in Hungary, the critique against the political regime manifested mainly in peace, environmental, and minority aid movements. (For more on the history of environmental movements in Hungary, see Farkas 2014: 52-57; 2009: 79-81.) Democratic political transformation opened the door to various forms of social participation which were illegal before, like the freedom of speech, civil disobedience actions, or the institutionalization of civil organizations (Szabó, 2007). Among the conditions created by the change of regime, the globally characteristic actors and segments of the civil society gradually came to life: environmental greens, pacifists, human rights organizations, anti-poverty organizations, Roma workers, supporters of otherness, globalization critics, alternative lifestyle advocates, political activists, and so on. At the same time, the changes not only represented a wide range of opportunities but also repositioned those civilian groups that worked in half-publicity and illegality before. The opposition who fought for civil rights in the earlier regime has lost its function after the change of the political climate, while some major organizations have become a political party (Szabó, 1998: 25). Since the change of the regime, civil society has become a more and more professional sector, which, in addition to the tasks of advocacy and civil control, has played a greater role in the maintenance and strengthening of small communities.

In the past thirty years, the civil sector works continually, therefore any division into bigger turning points would be an exaggeration (e.g. EU accession 2004). At the same time, there are decisive changes in the relationship of the civil sphere to power and politics. It has changed in many ways in all government cycles, but mostly, the dialogue between the state and the civil society has followed the legal aspects of the European trends. Although, the circumstances of how the civilian sphere works were undoubtedly tied to the

actual government until 2010, it has never had to follow the official strategy of the government in decision making. However, after the elections in 2010, the position of the civilian sphere and its relationship to power have changed and differentiated significantly. This new period has characterized by the "support of national NGOs involved in government, and the suppression of organizations performing the control function of civil society, and also the suppression of the alignment of interests" (Arató & Mikecz, 2015:331).

After 2010, the second Orbán government introduced a new concept on civil society. The essence of this is that civil organizations can be seen as "serving the nation as a community." The government, therefore, sees their roles and tasks in "strengthening national cohesion." The goal of the state is to "work together institutionally and equally with civil society based on nonprofit activities that enforce the common good for the greatest benefit for as many people as it possible" (Arató & Mikecz, 2015: 330).

As a result of the re-position of the civil society, the community-building function of organizations has gained a new meaning: those top-down system movements gained more advantages that emphasize the importance of the nation as one big civil society. Hiding the intention of emptying civil societies, the government created satellite movements and its own "civil" organizations. The most well-known of these is the Civil Integration Forum (CÖF), which has become known by their capacity of instant mobilization capacity for the sympathy of the government (Arató & Mikecz, 2015).

It is important that in this construction the civil society does not monitoring the state. From 2010, it has been becoming more and more evident that the government does not consider civilian those organizations that are supported by other foreign donor organizations and those watchdog organizations that do not support by the actual political power. Their employees could not define as civilians anymore, but rather as political activists who are financed by foreign interest-groups. With

this positioning, the government tries to disprove the work of these organizations and creates a sort of ideological background to limit their sphere of action. Thus, the fact that one of the fundamental roles of these democratic civil organizations is the supervision of the state is gradually being pushed into the background. On the other hand, it is becoming apparent that the state has taken control of the civil sphere.

For the fact that civil organizations and social movements have been unable to exert significant political influence in recent years and has become marginalized may be an important reason that civilian potential in Hungary cannot be regarded as strong as in other democratic European countries. Although there have been a number of decisive civil organizations since the change of the regime, it is typical for our country that the willingness to participate in social issues is very low in contrast not only to the Western European area but also to the Central and Eastern European region. Presumably, this weak civil potential contributes to that specific situation in Hungary, that besides those small number of organizations that actually work, there are a large number of formally registered civil organizations, which are often created due to the allocation of tender resources.

As there was a relatively small civilian resistance, legal actions against government-critical organizations started gradually from 2010. This process takes place not only in the physical space but also and primarily in the virtual space, where new, ideological ways of talking about civilians are being introduced.

In Hungarian, the public discourses, the topic of "foreign-financed political activism," has constructed and spread. This was also formulated at the legal level when the Parliament passed the Law on Transparency of Foreign Supported Organizations on June 13, 2017. According to this, if an organization receiving more than 7.2 million forints from abroad it has to use the definition "foreign-sponsored organization." After the anti-civilian propaganda appeared in public thinking, the next step was the criminalization of the government-critical organizations by those media

that are owned by the government (Bernáth & Messing, 2015, 2016; Nagy, 2016).

Under these circumstances, those organizations that are deal with refugee aid have gradually become are being caught in the crossfire between governmental power and civil society. During the 2017 National Consultation, the Hungarian Helsinki Committee's legal work appeared in false colors when the Consultation claimed that the organization "protects migrants who violate the law" therefore the Committee advocates the abuse of the national law. Similar accusations have had the organization of the Migration Aid because of volunteering for refugees, and therefore indirectly its informal subgroups just as the Migration Aid Debrecen. The members hence were apostrophe as "foreign agents" who works for George Soros. This accusation created an unforeseen and ambivalent situation among the volunteers. In this process, the altruistic volunteering group with a positive social perception has become explicitly negative as a result of these politicized interpretations. This criminalization of the civilian actions has become part of the secularization policy around the refugee issue.

The political aspects of volunteering

The pressure resulted by the migration crisis and public media that criminalizing refugees have contributed to the significant increase of xenophobia in Hungarian society (Simonovits & Bernát, 2016. 41–47; Feischmidt, 2016; 6; Simonovits, 2016. 54). In spite of this, numerous migration aid volunteer groups were organized in the civilian sphere (Simonovits & Bernát, 2016, 83, Bernát, Kertész & Tóth, 2016) to help refugees passing through the Hungarian border in 2015. According to the TÁRKI OMNIBUSZ survey in 2015, 3% of Hungarian society had taken part in migration aid somehow (donation, voluntary work) to help refugees arriving in Hungary.

The phenomena of these grassroots civilian organizations with immediate mobilization potential in Hungary evolved in line with the global trends but these also incorporated local features. In

the case of most countries affected by the migration wave, the newly activated civilian groups have played a crucial role in providing humanitarian assistance to refugees, that complemented or sometimes exceeded the official support of the state (Kaun & Uldam, 2018: 2186). (Comment: About the network of volunteers assisting refugees in Greece, see Chtouris & S. Miller, 2017. On the voluntary movement in Sweden and the opportunities for online space, see Kaun & Uldam, 2018. On the unique situation of the French Calais Refugee Camp, see Sandri, 2017. About the reorganization of social relations and expressions of solidarity in the small fishing village, Lesbos: Papataxiarchis 2016. The social discourse of refugees integration, known as 'Willkommenskultur' in Germany 2016, see Hamann & Karakayali. On Serbian-Hungarian border and cross-border humanitarian aid as a civil movements: Pavelková, 2017.).

The "*who would be responsible for this?*" type of question infiltrated to the Hungarian discourse on the responsibility of the state power versus civil society and it opened a fault-line between different groups of society. At the same time, it has also become a matter of debate that *who would be considered as indigent* and do we have to provide support for these people? In the case of the Hungarian secularization policy - unresolved global issues such as the rising threat of terrorism in Western-Europe - played a huge role. On the other hand, for the Central and Eastern-European society, the memory of the 90's South Slavic conflict and the caused migration wave still lives as a tragic memory (Örkény, Csepeli & Zsigó, 2017:5). Hungarian voluntary movements had organized in this context, for a very short, yet intensive and decisive period.

As a result of the above-described process, the examined organization have become a terrain where the "good" will become devalued, thus the previously appreciated altruistic activity is amortized. Not only solidarity becomes stigmatized, but it also transforms into political opinion and resolution. By the secularization policy of the government and their refuse of refugees, the

act of volunteering becomes the critique of the government and resistance (Hamann & Karakayali, 2016: 84). However, volunteers would not want to identify with this stigma as it is not their own but an external perspective. "*I can say with a clear heart that it is not about politics for me.*" (H.T. woman, volunteer). "*We did it by ourselves because we are human beings and we need to help those who are in trouble. (...) There is no political opinion in this.*" (Á.C. man, volunteer). "*It was clear to me that I go and help, those people are in trouble, they need help, and we have to give it if we can! I don't understand why one should see this as opposition.*" (Sz.Z. woman, volunteer).

Volunteers are not considered their charity work as a manifestation of their political opinion, moreover, their political views are absolutely not heterogeneously opposition views. Among the members of the group that I investigated there were many of those who declared themselves as the sympathizers of the regnant power. "*I regard myself a right-wing person from being, and it still hasn't changed.*" (A.M. woman, volunteer). While apolitical motives emerge from the individual narratives, volunteers in different scenes have been constantly confronted with the stigma of opposition, and the violation of the norms. After the stigma that has come from the regnant power, voluntary actions could not be considered apolitical, according to some authors (Fleischmann & Steinhilper, 2017).

Volunteers recently get the aforementioned "foreign agent" status in practice, several times in vulgar forms. "*Often I have to get that I am a traitor of the country. They split me off once. Very often, right-wingers spoke these things to me, came out to film me, took pictures of us, posted our faces on migrant observer pages. At first, I experienced it very badly, a leader of the Jobbik posted a picture where I was absolutely recognizable, I wanted to take it down, and then I realized that I could not reach anything with it, because whoever wants to humiliate me, he will do it, comes out, and as I am there from 6 to midnight, he can make it, and some people made it.*" (K.F. woman, volunteer). Volunteers regularly get nicknames like "*home-surrender*", "*migrant-petting*", "*foreign agent*." The negative perception of their volunteering activities was not only experienced by the broader social strata, primarily through the media but also

appeared in their own environment, in their workplace, in their friendships and family relationships.

This ambivalent and strongly politicized context has brought volunteers to different decision situations. It is a general response that volunteers conceal the assistance of refugees from certain people, which have different forms. In most cases, the motivation is the avoidance of workplace conflicts and the retention of the status quo. *"My superiors didn't know it officially. I'm not sure if they wouldn't stop me if they know it, I think so. I didn't have to ask for permission, because I did my job, and then I go out at night, and also, luckily it happened during the holiday season. When it was time to work, but I had to do a "service" during that time, I always compensated it at night. I also pay special attention to go on holiday if I have to go for donating, or whatever... so I take care to nobody get to know it."* (Zs.J. woman, volunteer).

Volunteers who work for the local city administration or as a teacher tried to stay away from public spaces and not leaving digital footprints. *"The TV came out, and I hid from the cameras properly. Imagine what it would have been if the staff or the boss saw me on the recordings"* (H.T. woman, volunteer). *"They didn't know this at my workplace, right. The media have made brainwashing. I am a doctor inspector, and I have to have a good relationship with the doctors, so I can't jeopardize my relationship with them with this."* (A.T. woman, volunteer).

Many of the volunteers did not tell their family members that they were helping the refugees. *"My grandfather who was informed only about the governmental media didn't know that I usually come to the station ... He is 90 years old and I didn't want to make him upset by the fact that her daughter came out (helping the refugees - editor)."* (Zs.J. woman, volunteer). One volunteer who came from Asian hid her activity on the online platforms that she used. *"I don't share my own on the Facebook profile because of my family, many people don't like it, so they would just be afraid of me. They always say to me that we have to work in a manner to not get into trouble. They can't help from there if anything goes wrong."* (N.O. man, volunteer).

But not only concealing of the volunteer activity is present. Few of them coming out consciously

with their helper activity. One of the volunteers, who is an individual entrepreneur, therefore, he does not have to fear of his superiors' opinion, announces his commitment to every scene and surface. *"They knew that I won't hold it back because I post about it constantly on Facebook. I didn't get involved with ant fight, although I had argued sometimes, but within a normal framework. There were some who could be convincing anyway, but there were some I wiped out of my Facebook."* (Á.C. man, volunteer).

Volunteers hid their engagement situated, they shared it for certain circles, while they concealed it in other situations and scenes. In everyday life, in their surroundings, they have experienced extremist beliefs about contemporary migration processes. Altruistic action embedded in their life stories, the volunteering itself, which previously generated social recognition in their environment, became very negative as a result of political interpretations. *"It was frightening to see how aggressively could react some people, only the fact that you helping someone out there, no matter who, and this is causing tension. It's a big social problem right now, serious enough."* (K.F. woman, volunteer). According to this research, informality is therefore a kind of strategy for volunteering within the contemporary socio-political framework conditions. In the second half of the 2010s, instead of open volunteering, which was clearly valuable in a wide social circle, those who want to volunteer in Hungary in connection with real social problems are often forced to help informally, secretly, through trusting relationships, if they do not want political labels and negative publicity for their actions to receive judgments. *"You do it quietly, you help and that's it."* (Sz.Z. woman, volunteer).

Summary

The article analyzed the motivation, attitude and social responsibility of Debrecen's volunteers assisting refugees in 2015, and their voluntary activity, embedded in a broader set of socio-political conditions. The goal is to create complex and multivocal research on the phenomenon. The first part of the study mapped out the formation and operational peculiarities of the refugee

solidarity organization of Debrecen, then I examined the individual aspects of volunteering, after I presented the political interpretations of refugee assistance and its effects on volunteering, at last, I illustrated the socio-political context of the volunteer movement. This research by analyzing the micro-perspective of contemporary social organizations could contribute to the understanding of the development of Hungarian civil activity, its possibilities, and social functions as well as the framework conditions of the governmental power.

The specificities of the research on the Debrecen volunteers with solidarity with refugees are summarized in the following. *Civil vs. state responsibility*: The phenomenon of grassroots groups mobilized in the migratory wave is a global trend, but it is also a unique situation at the classical aid organizations, the state's social care system and the local government in Debrecen are almost absolutely not participated in these humanitarian actions that were required at the railway station. As a result, the volunteers considered their philanthropic action as the civilian take over of the assumed state responsibility. The interviews showed that volunteers were aware of the importance of their social involvement: *"What we did there was not a civil task! We worked instead of the state!"* (Sz.Z. woman, volunteer).

The key role of online interfaces: At the time of the migration wave in 2015, specific new forms of community use of the social media emerged in Hungary. The virtual space provided not only a fund of infrastructure but also actively shaped and influenced the nature of volunteering. It played a role in the formation, operation, and mobilization of civic groups, in the involvement of volunteers and in fundraising. Online interfaces had great importance in real-time communication between participating actors and in the outward communication of solidarity, in the individual and community level.

Informality and volatility: The informal nature, the short-term commitment, the volatility nature of grassroots movements, the plural motives of reflexive volunteering, and the negative experience

in political field predicted them to work in informal way. This process was characterized by some specificities: (1) Instead of coordinating in the physical space, the volunteers continuously communicated on Facebook, so logistic decisions were made in the online space. This fact strengthened and maintained the anti-institutional character of the organization. However, online communication required a senior administrator, that facilitated a sort of group hierarchy. This process of institutionalization gave rise to competition, leading to deepening conflicts. (2) After the "disappearance" of immigrants, refugees aid had become obsolete, requiring the repositioning of volunteering. Participants all agreed that they would still like to pursue philanthropic activities, support homeless people, the poor, or those who live in minority groups. However, there were different opinions on implementation. This had led to a redefinition of volunteering at community and individual levels. (3) Volunteers were not led by political motives and goals, they did not want to enter into the political-power field, and therefore their political stigmatization and the criminalization of their activities made them insecure, reduced their enthusiasm and thus the sustainability of the initiative.

Individual experience of volunteering: In the case of philanthropic engagement of the volunteers, individual professional knowledge, competencies, available resources, and ethnic and/or religious involvement were crucial. In addition, there is a huge importance of the narrative identity built around volunteering, the biographical embeddedness of the motivation of charity, which promotes the construction of the volunteer self. It justifies the action of charity, demonstrates its validity (strengthen the apolitical character of the action), and points out volunteering as a constantly present phenomenon in the life of the individual.

Temporary character: The phenomenon of the "migration crisis" that appeared unexpectedly in Hungary and Debrecen had an impact on all aspects of volunteering, from goals to tools and to the mobilization opportunities. The nature of our

country's transit character is basically determined the nature of the voluntary activity. In contrast to the long-term, integration-oriented civic efforts of the Western European host countries, the focus was on providing the basic needs of those who pass through the country. In Debrecen, resources to support these basic needs were provided by the volunteers, donations, and medical and foreign language skills of some volunteers.

Stigmatization: The government's securitization policy has been divided the civic society into worthy and unworthy groups in recent years. Because of the "nationalization" of civil organizations, it was not only the civilian activities that become worthy or unworthy of state support but also, refugees and their helpers have been directly criminalized. Not only the mere fact that refugees in need exist in Hungary but also, the aid for them became explicitly the target of rejection. This has led to the transformation of the relationship between the civil and political spheres and predicts further conflicts. Volunteers in their immediate surroundings have experienced that the social perception of humane, philanthropic behaviour that previously was positive, has become ambivalent. Many of them have concealed their activity in their workplace and in their immediate family environment. Despite their will, the volunteers could get into the "opposition stand" simply by the stigmatizing of their target group. It is the same for social scientists dealing with refugees. All this draws attention to the politicized nature of contemporary volunteering in Hungary, where the assistance of a group could lead to social exclusion.

Volunteer networks stand for refugees, are organized at that time, which was not unique, as it followed global processes, however, they also incorporated local specificities (Bernát, Kertész & Tóth, 2016 287). As in other countries in the European Union, refugee aid was based on civil initiatives in the major cities of Hungary. The humanitarian work of the volunteers of Debrecen was linked to this international and domestic trend. They used the opportunities provided by social media in various forms of crisis management, to

create knowledge capital needed to assist refugees, and for built communication networks for volunteers. The intensive activity in Debrecen to help refugees in the summer of 2015 can be assessed as a local response to global processes, essentially as a global experience of volunteering (Meyrowitz, 2005). On the one hand, philanthropic social organization was influenced by international processes such as the migration wave and the EU policy on refugees. On the other hand, the domestic measures such as the construction of the southern borderline, the closure of the Debrecen refugee camp, the restriction of volunteering to refugees and the stigmatization of voluntary assistance.

The study wanted to illuminate this complex social phenomenon from several directions. The results of the research may provide new knowledge in social science interpretations related to the 2015 migration phenomenon in Hungary.

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