

Foreword

The violence of prejudice is omnipresent. Prejudices are one of the most important social hurdles for the development of democratic societies. They are the primary barometer for gauging the unequal worth and treatment of social groups, which attacks the foundation of democracies. We call the different patterns of prejudices group-focused enmity, since prejudices, discriminatory intentions, hostilities and many other facets are linked to each other to establish social hierarchies in societies. Europe is currently suffering from group-focused enmity as daily reports show. Antisemitism, anti-Muslim sentiments and antiziganism are the most prominent expressions of right-wing populist, right-wing extremist and civil anti-democratic sentiments, which cross social strata and ideological barriers. Group-focused enmity is not only a norm at the extremist margins of societies. It is embedded within the centre of societies. The ever-present scientific question coming from these observations is at once simple and complex: *Why?* Why do we observe these prejudices within societies?

This book is focused on Hungary, which is obviously shaped by widespread group-focused enmity against Roma, but which is similar in its prejudices compared with other countries. The author of the book, Luca Váradi, is one of our talented young scientists who worked with us on the analysis of group-focused enmity across Europe. She was involved in our study on intolerance, prejudice and discrimination.¹ During our reports on prejudices, she developed the motivation to look behind the curtain and take the notion that adolescence is a critical phase of socialization more seriously. She started to develop her own studies, which concentrated on the social discrimination of Roma in Hungary by teenagers.

Her take on prejudices is unique, worth reading and merits taking the time to understand. Why should we read it? First, Luca Váradi presents a comprehensive and complete report on studies about prejudices in Hungary. If you want to know about studies on antiziganism in Hungary, you simply have to read the book. Second, Luca Váradi refers to one of the most prominent theses

¹ <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/do/07908-20110311.pdf>

on the root of prejudices, taking the Hungarian society into account: she analysed the development and establishment of prejudices in adolescents. Astonishingly the proneness of adolescents to prejudice has been largely omitted in both theoretical and empirical study. In this book, you can find all of the most prominent theories on the development of prejudices. Thirdly, she presents results from her innovative survey research on the prejudices of Hungarian teenagers from Budapest, which is one of the most comprehensive empirical recent studies of this demographic.

The study demonstrates the shared nature of prejudices and the overt and subtle mechanisms that keep prejudices running within adolescent groups. Her findings contradict some prominent theses on the socialization of prejudices. Luca Váradi shows how anti-Roma norms within societies directly determine adolescent prejudices. This link between societal norms and individual prejudices is underscored by micro-social group processes within school classes and peer groups.

This book offers a look into the core question of prejudice research: How do macro-social contexts determine micro-social adaptations of hostilities against outgroups? Additionally, it offers a look into the mechanisms by which adolescent groups share antiziganist ideologies, even if teachers and parents contradict them.

If a book can open our minds to different perspectives on one of the most pressing social problems in Europe, this is the book to do it. If a book opens the discourse on critical unanswered questions on the development of prejudices, this book contributes to the debate by empirical observations. If a book on prejudices can be a societal statement, this book surely is one. Certain facts on anti-Roma prejudices in Hungary will be shocking. But scientific studies like the present book are good measures against accepting prejudices as normalcy. They shock our beliefs about prejudices and motivate us to focus the roots of prejudices, which can help us to fight them.

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