

# THE STUDY OF THE SELF-ATTITUDE OF DISPLACED PEOPLE IN THE CONDITIONS OF ADAPTATION TO THE NEW SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT\*\*

DOI: 10.24234/miopap.v1i11.13

**Levon SARGSYAN**, *PhD in Psychology, Associate Professor, Acting Head of Chair of Psychology named after Academician Mkrtich Mazmanyan, Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University.*

*E-mail:* [sargsyanlevon23@aspu.am](mailto:sargsyanlevon23@aspu.am)

## **Abstract**

*The work focuses on the characteristics of a person's self-attitude in the context of social-psychological displacement problems. This study examines how displacement can lead to changes in a person's characteristics and the specific socio-psychological challenges they face in their new living environment. The research focuses on understanding how self-attitude is expressed during socio-psychological adaptation among displaced individuals. The findings reveal that individuals who experience displacement in a new social environment tend to exhibit low self-confidence, self-management, self-evaluation, self-acceptance, and self-analysis. As a result, they often face internal conflicts and engage in self-criticism. This suggests that during the initial months of displacement, individuals develop a negative self-attitude, with positive aspects of self-attitude diminishing. However, the second stage indicates that positive changes in self-attitude are crucial for the survival and well-being of the individual and their family.*

*Displacement and the challenges of adapting to a new socio-cultural environment are driven by the need for self-reassessment and self-acceptance. Moving from self-criticism and internal conflict towards self-esteem and self-acceptance serves an adaptive function, allowing individuals to better adjust to their new life conditions.*

*Moreover, the study underscores the profound impact of social support networks in facilitating the transition towards a more positive self-attitude among displaced individuals. Strong social ties and community connections are crucial in bolstering self-esteem and fostering a sense of belonging, which are paramount for navigating the challenges of displacement. Recognizing and leveraging these support systems can significantly contribute to displaced individuals' psychological resilience and adaptive capabilities, ultimately enhancing their overall well-being and successful integration into their new environment.*

**Keywords:** *displacement, war, adjustment, self-attitude, positive self-attitude, socio-psychological difficulties, new living conditions.*

---

\*\* © The Author(s) 2024. Open Access. This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third-party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

## INTRODUCTION

Displacement is understood as a complicated and multi-faceted social-psychological process which massively influences mental health and the social integration of individuals. Most displacement processes subject individuals to deep psychosocial stressors that massively change self-perception and behavioural patterns. Displacement is presented not as a physical removal from the familiar environment but at the same time as the loss of social networks based in that environment, the loss of disruption of daily routines of life, with a feeling of general insecurity and instability. This compilation of stressors requires the researcher to have a system and deep understanding of the socio-psychological mechanisms of adaptation migrants use to adjust to new circumstances.

The impact of displacement, therefore, goes beyond its actual effect to the very core of the individual's life. As Sargsyan (2016) states, forced displacement places people into an environment where past experiences and the known self continuously fight against emergent challenges and new realities.

Herein, with the loss of home, community, and way of life, very often lies an essential reassessment of the self-attitude—a critical part of one's psychological make-up, covering self-esteem, self-perception, and intrinsic motivations guiding behaviour (Kolysenko, 2004). The first displacement is often marked with confusion, loss, and disorientation. People have to find their way through a minefield of new social and environmental norms while at the same time carrying their luggage of grief for the loss of home and community. Based on the study of Sargsyan (2020), the displaced have decreased self-esteem and increased self-criticism since it was hard to merge their past identity with the new one. During this stage of adjustment, psychological distress may be set in symptoms of anxiety, depression, and PTSD that could become compounded due to the instability of the displacement itself.

But the course of displacement is not a story of deprivation and desolation.

This is a period when adaptation, in terms of change in self-attitude, begins to pay off, and as people start to incorporate themselves into their new environment, social support definitely plays a very big role in the whole process. The community and social networks following these relationships bring about emotional support, practical help, and a feeling of belonging—all

important factors for psychological recovery and adaptation (Osipova & Miroshnichenko, 2022). A relevant example is the study of the displaced from the conflict in Artsakh, which shows how the displacement will influence the self-attitude of the displaced and his or her adaptation process in the future.

According to the study of Sargsyan, these first signals of psychological adaptation have been given over time by these people first oppressed by the trauma of displacement, which is growth in self-esteem and less self-criticism. This adaptive process is significantly influenced by the extent and quality of the social support available to the displaced, hence underscoring the role of the community in building resilient systems (Pantyleev, 1991). Realizing that far-reaching impacts on displacements, the understanding and supporting of the adaptive processes of the displaced are important not only for the personal recovery of his or her own but also for the social and cultural integration of the affected community.

Hence, the study results on self-attitude in displaced populations would show that the individual psychological processes and society could be rather complex. Such insights are necessary for developing targeted interventions for the displaced people's psychological and social needs to transition easily into new communities and integrate well. In sum, displacement poses important threats to people's psychic and social well-being and provides chances for growth and adaptation. For betterment in assisting the displaced, the situation needs to be turned into an opportunity for self-growth and advancement of the community through strong social support with an understanding of the psychological grounding of displacement.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Displaced people almost always face problems when coming to terms with new social environments. Those problems are of a psychological order that affects their self-attitude and well-being. This literature review identifies the psychological and emotional responses of the displaced people to the new environments, the difficulties inherent in it for the most vulnerable groups, and its impact on broader experiences of social integration and adaptation.

At the same time, emotional stability and self-esteem are important constituents of the adaptation process. Vasylykevych (2019) conducted research that revealed gender differences among

uprooted individuals. It has been determined that men are characterized by high emotional resistance, with women tending to be more family and relationship-oriented in informal spheres. This juxtaposition highlights the need for gender-sensitive approaches in the support programs (Vasylkevych, 2019).

Such social groupings as children and aged who are displaced have huge adaptation difficulties from social and psychological points of view. Yurkiv and Lukanov (2021) proved that displacement leads to deteriorated psycho-emotional health in children and showed that problems of social passivity of old people, who increase suspicion, lead to isolation. Making Development and Education Relevant in the Lives of Displaced Children A central position in adaptation belongs to educational settings. Sylkina (2022) states that the most effective in schools are, first, means of emotional support and communicative tools; they are primarily projective techniques and group activities aimed at the child's integration into a new social and educational environment.

The impact that such interaction has on adaptation outcomes is profound. Tagiyeva (2021) believes such an interaction is a very complicated and dynamic process; hence, it should be treated in perspective to reach well-natured neighbourhood relations between the displaced and local population.

### RESEARCH QUESTION

This important question brings us to an array of different issues: *How do the self-attitudes of the displaced relate to psychological adaptation and social integration in new environments?* This, therefore, will shed more light on the important role that psychological support and understanding the social dynamics play in enabling displaced populations to adjust to new social contexts. Further research into targeted interventions may shed more light on effective strategies for increasing their integration and well-being.

### RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

**Objective:** The study aimed to explore self-attitude manifestations during the socio-psychological adaptation process among displaced individuals following the 2020 Artsakh war.

**Participants:** The sample consisted of 50 individuals aged 35-45 from the Hadrut and Shushi regions of Artsakh who had been displaced by the conflict.

### **Methodology:**

**Stages:** The research was conducted in two phases. The first stage covered the initial six months post-displacement, while the second stage spanned from six months to one-year post-displacement.

**Data Collection:** Methods employed included conversations and testing with diagnostic methodologies for socio-psychological adaptation developed by K. Rogers and R. Diamond, alongside S.R. Pantileev's methods for studying self-attitude.

### **Tools:**

- K. Rogers and R. Diamond's Methodology: Used to diagnose socio-psychological adjustment.
- S.R. Pantileev's Methodology: Focused on self-attitude's emotional and evaluative aspects.

**Data Analysis:** Data from the methodologies was used to assess self-confidence, self-management, self-acceptance, self-analysis, and internal conflict among participants.

The analysis involved correlational studies to explore the relationships between different self-attitude components and their impact on adaptation.

## **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The study examined self-attitude manifestations during the adaptation process of 50 displaced individuals aged 35-45 from the Hadrut and Shushi regions of Artsakh, who were part of the research sample. The research was conducted in two stages: the first covered the period from displacement up to 6 months, while the second stage spanned from 6 months to 1 year after displacement. To gather data, the researchers employed conversation and testing methods, including K. Rogers and R. Diamond's diagnostic methodology for socio-psychological adaptation and S.R. Pantileev's methods for studying self-attitude.

The results of the research are presented below. According to the data, inner sincerity and the degree of being open or closed to oneself were reported as high by 10%, medium by 56%, and low by 34% among displaced individuals. This phase is primarily characterized by a sense of anticipation and hope for positive information, with individuals often clinging to the possibility of miraculous returns to their homes. Conversations with the displaced individuals revealed that their

narratives frequently evolved as they sought to rationalize their decision to leave their original homes and assign blame to others for the circumstances.

Self-confidence was expressed as high by 8%, medium by 32%, and low by 60% of the participants. Notably, this aspect exhibited the lowest and average levels of expression, which we attribute to the impact of the war and its aftermath and the challenges posed by their new living conditions. The quality of self-management was reported as high by 14%, average by 26%, and low by 60%, which we attribute to the prevalent uncertainty in their current situation and the loss of positive expectations for the future. Reflected self-attitude quality was indicated as high by 30%, average by 40%, and low by 30%.

As for self-evaluation, quality was expressed as high by 22%, medium by 40%, and low by 38%. We believe that the decline in self-renewal is directly linked to the experience of displacement, which results in a loss of meaning in one's own existence and self-worth. Self-acceptance quality was reported as high by 10%, medium by 64%, and low by 26%. Especially during this period, self-acceptance among displaced individuals may be low, given the loss of homeland, home, and past experiences.

Self-analysis quality was indicated as high by 8%, medium by 26%, and low by 66%. In this period, displaced individuals primarily focused on the present and felt uncertain about the future, making self-analysis challenging. Internal conflict was expressed as high by 60%, medium by 22%, and low by 18%. This component showed higher and moderate levels of expression, manifesting as struggles to accept reality and acknowledge one's mistakes and misdeeds. Self-criticism was reported as high by 28%, medium by 34%, and low by 38%, primarily linked to realising and accepting the irreversible nature of the events that transpired.

The data presented below is derived from the diagnostic methodology of socio-psychological adjustment developed by K. Rogers and R. Diamond. Based on the data obtained, 28% of the subjects exhibited high adaptability, 28% showed normal adaptability, and 44% had low adaptability. Regarding self-acceptance, 10% scored high, 42% rated themselves at a normal level, and 48% expressed low self-acceptance. Regarding acceptance from others, 32% reported high levels, 36% perceived it as normal, and 32% experienced low acceptance. The emotional comfort scale showed high expression in 6% of the participants, normal expression in 30%, and low expression in 64%. Similarly, the internal control scale was large at 14%, normal at 32%, and low at

54%.

In summary, the data reveals that many individuals face difficulties in adaptability, self-acceptance, emotional comfort, and internal control due to displacement and the challenges of adapting to their new circumstances. The Dominance Aspiration scale showed high expression in 40% of the participants, normal expression in 26%, and high expression in 34%. Correlations were found between K. Rogers and R. Diamond's diagnosis of socio-psychological adjustment and S. Pantileev's research methodologies on self-attitude (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Correlational relationships of the indicators in the first phase of the methodology:**

		Self- confidence	Self- valuation	Self- acceptance	Internal- conflict	Self- criticism
<b>Adaptability</b>	Correlation, according to Pearson	0.022	-0.068	0.445**	-0.445**	-0.410**
	Significance (two-tailed)	.708	.565	.003	.001	.002
<b>Self-acceptance</b>	Correlation, according to Pearson	0.411**	-0.387	0.490**	-0.387**	-0.465**
	Significance (two-tailed)	.001	.245	.004	.003	.001
<b>Emotional comfort</b>	Correlation, according to Pearson	0.244	0.287	-0.110	-0.465**	-0.111
	Significance (two-tailed)	.069	.099	.220	.002	.284
<b>Introspection</b>	Correlation, according to Pearson	0.189	0.098	-0.187	-0.415**	-0.214
	Significance (two-tailed)	.124	.420	.231	.001	.088

The table presents the correlation between the indicators of the 1st stage of the diagnosis of social-psychological adaptation and the methods used to study self-attitude. A strong negative

correlation is observed between adaptability, self-acceptance, emotional comfort, and internal control qualities—crucial for personal adjustment. This indicates that as these qualities improve, the level of internal conflict decreases when displaced individuals adapt to their new living conditions. Conversely, internal strife and self-criticism are inversely related to adaptation and self-attitude during this process.

Furthermore, a positive correlation is noted between adaptability and self-acceptance qualities, as well as between self-acceptance quality and self-confidence. This suggests that enhancing self-acceptance plays a significant role in achieving personality adjustment for those who have been displaced.

During the process of adapting to the new social environment, displaced individuals often exhibit low levels of self-confidence, self-management, self-esteem, self-acceptance, and self-analysis. Consequently, they tend to experience high levels of internal conflict and self-criticism. In the initial months of displacement, negative self-attitude is commonly observed.

Moving to the results of the second stage of the methodology, the quality of inner sincerity is reported as high at 32%, medium at 40%, and low at 28%. After a few months, displaced individuals come to terms with their past and uncertain future.

Self-confidence quality is expressed as high in 28%, medium in 48%, and low in 24%. The increase in self-confidence is attributed to individuals' growing faith in the future and their high expectations, often fueled by promises of returning to their hometowns.

Self-control is high in 40%, medium in 32%, and low in 28%, while reflective self-attitude is high in 30%, medium in 50%, and low in 20%.

Self-esteem quality is reported as high in 46%, medium in 36%, and low in 18%, with the decrease attributed to forced displacement and the challenges of adapting to new conditions.

As for self-acceptance, quality is expressed as high by 42%, average by 36%, and low by 21.6%, with factors such as saving one's family and positive changes in social acceptance contributing to the increase.

Self-analysis quality is reported as high at 50%, medium at 36%, and low at 14%, indicating an increased focus on reflecting on the past, present, and future.

Internal conflict quality is expressed as high in 30%, medium in 48%, and low in 22%, with a relative decrease attributed to positive developments in personal qualities.



Self-criticism is reported as high in 46%, medium in 40%, and low in 14%, with self-criticism and internal conflict decreasing due to positive developments in survival, living, and overall self-attitude.

Among the subjects, 34% exhibit high adaptability, 40% demonstrate normal adaptability, and 26% display low adaptability. Regarding self-acceptance, approximately 20% report high levels, 40% report normal levels, and about 40% report low levels.

Regarding others' acceptance, 26% perceive it as high, 40% as normal, and 34% as low. The emotional comfort scale shows high expression in 16%, normal in 32%, and low in 52%. The internal control scale is 22% high, 38% normal, and 40% low.

The Dominance Aspiration scale is high at 50%, normal at 28%, and high at 22%, indicating a positive trend toward adaptation and establishment in the new social environment.

In the second stage of the research, correlational links were found between K. Rogers and R. Diamond's diagnosis of socio-psychological adjustment and S. Pantileev's methods of studying self-attitude, presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Correlations of the indicators in the second phase of the study on socio-psychological adaptation and introspection methods:**

		Self-valuation	Self-acceptance	Self-criticism
<b>Adaptability</b>	Correlation, according to Pearson	-0.062	0.037	-0.395**
	Significance (two-tailed)	.608	.777	.001
<b>Self-acceptance</b>	Correlation, according to Pearson	0.499**	0.402**	-0.458**
	Significance (two-tailed)	.001	.006	.001
<b>Acceptance others</b>	Correlation, according to Pearson	0.088	-0.108	0.461*
	Significance (two-tailed)	.558	.301	.008

The second stage's correlation analysis highlights self-attitude's crucial role in the adaptation process, as its components are interconnected and mutually influential. Significant changes occur in a person's self-attitude during this period. Adaptability and self-acceptance qualities exhibit an

inverse correlation with the self-criticism component, while a direct correlation is observed between self-attitude and the acceptance of others. Furthermore, positive correlations are noted between self-attitude qualities such as self-esteem and self-acceptance, and the adjustment process, particularly concerning self-acceptance."

## **DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the research underscores the profound psychological journey experienced by displaced individuals as they grapple with the challenges of adaptation and self-reassessment. Throughout the study, participants exhibited a complex interplay of emotions, characterized by a poignant struggle to reconcile conflicting feelings of guilt and justification for their decision to flee their homes. This internal conflict highlights the deep-seated trauma and moral dilemmas inherent in the experience of displacement.

As displaced individuals endeavour to adapt to unfamiliar social environments, they confront a myriad of obstacles stemming from diminished self-confidence, self-management, self-esteem, self-acceptance, and self-analysis. These challenges often manifest in heightened levels of internal conflict and self-criticism, fostering a negative self-attitude during the initial phases of displacement. The disorientation and uncertainty brought about by displacement further compound these struggles, making the journey of self-renewal all the more arduous.

Nevertheless, amidst these initial adversities, the research reveals a glimmer of hope. As adaptation progresses, there is a discernible positive trend, marked by a gradual decline in levels of self-criticism and internal conflict. This positive shift can be attributed to the resilience and resourcefulness of displaced individuals and the tangible improvements in survival and living conditions over time. As individuals begin to reclaim agency over their lives, there is a corresponding enhancement in self-attitude, characterized by increased self-sympathy and self-respect.

The significance of these positive changes extends beyond individual well-being to encompass the resilience and cohesion of entire families. As evidenced by the findings of the second stage of the research, the transformation in self-attitude plays a pivotal role in fostering not only personal survival but familial stability and prosperity. Indeed, the experience of displacement serves as a

catalyst for profound introspection and self-evaluation, prompting individuals to prioritize the attainment of self-acceptance and positive self-esteem above all else.

In essence, the journey of self-renewal embarked upon by displaced individuals represents a powerful testament to the human spirit's capacity for resilience and adaptation in the face of adversity. By embracing the transformative potential of self-attitude, individuals chart a course towards personal well-being and contribute to displaced communities' collective strength and vitality. As we continue to navigate the complexities of displacement and adaptation, we must recognize and support the intrinsic value of self-renewal and self-acceptance as essential components of the human experience.

*Acknowledgements:* The authors would like to thank the editors and anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback.

*Funding:* This study was not supported by internal or external funding sources. All research presented in the article was conducted at the expense of the author(s).

*Availability of data and materials:* All supporting data generated or analysed for this study are available upon request.

*Ethics approval and consent to participate:* Not applicable.

*Consent for publication:* Not applicable.

*Competing interests:* The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

## REFERENCES

- Kolyshko, A.M. (2004).** Psychology of Self-Relation. Grodno State University.
- Leshkevich, T.G. (2022).** The problem of readaptation as a need for structuring the living space. Socio-psychological consequences of war.
- Osipova, A.A., & Miroshnichenko, A.V. (2022).** Psychological problems of forced resettlements located in temporary accommodation points in the Rostov region. Socio-psychological consequences of war.
- Pantiyleev, S.R. (1991).** Self-Attitude as an Emotional-Evaluative System. Moscow.
- Sargsyan, L.K. (2016).** The Study of Self-Attitude Formation: Psychological Research in the Field of Psychology. Proceedings of Young Psychologists.
- Sylkina, S. (2022).** Social Adaptation of Children of Internally Displaced Persons in the Conditions of a New Settlement. Education and Pedagogical Sciences. [https://doi.org/10.12958/2227-2747-2022-3\(181\)-69-79](https://doi.org/10.12958/2227-2747-2022-3(181)-69-79).
- Tagiyeva, T. (2021).** Features of the adaptation of internally displaced persons to the new social environment. <https://doi.org/10.24923/2305-8757.2021-5.2>.

**Vasykivych, Y. Z. (2019).** Diagnostics of Psychological Peculiarities of Emotional Attitudes of an Internally Displaced People. Social work and education. <https://doi.org/10.25128/2520-6230.19.2.7>.

**Yurkiv, Y., & Lukanov, D. (2021).** Difficulties of Social and Psychological Adaptation of Vulnerable Groups of Internally Displaced Persons to New Living Conditions. Scientific Bulletin of Uzhhorod University. Series: «Pedagogy. Social Work», 469-472. <https://doi.org/10.24144/2524-0609.2021.48.469-472>.

*Received: 17/08/2023*  
*Accepted: 12/04/2024*

***Publisher's Note:***

*ASPU Publication remains neutral concerning jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.*