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Pity for economically disadvantaged groups motivates  
donation and ally collective action intentions

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## Abstract

We argue that pity can motivate collective action intentions toward groups that are both politically and economically deprived. We tested this connection in four online surveys and an experiment. In Study 1 ( $N = 1007$ ), pity for the Roma in Hungary predicted collective action intentions, which was replicated in Study 2 in connection with refugees in Germany ( $N = 191$ ) and in Hungary ( $N = 563$ ). Study 3 ( $N = 475$ ) demonstrated that for not economically but politically disadvantaged groups (e. g., sexual minorities), pity was not a predictor of ally action. In an experiment (Study 4,  $N = 447$ ), pity was just as strong predictor of collective action intentions as outrage on behalf of an economically and politically disadvantaged outgroup. Pity can be a mobilizing emotion when it comes to groups that are both economically and politically disadvantaged, however, outrage remains more important in the absence of economic hardships.

Keywords: pity, ally collective action, donation, economic disadvantage

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“Don’t feel sorry for refugees—believe in them” (Mufleh, 2017); “Refugees don’t need your pity.” (Badkhen, 2016); “Integrate refugees with help, not pity” (De Gruyter, 2016). These headlines suggest that feeling pity for someone is a problematic, paternalistic emotion that may stand in the way of effective action. However, philosophers (Konstan, 2015) and social psychologists alike have been interested in the nature of pity as an ambivalent emotion (Lunardo, & Bezençon, 2015) without offering a clear-cut answer to the question whether pity is a useful (Florian, Mikulincer, & Hirschberger, 1999) or a harmful emotion (Leach, Snider & Iyer, 2002; Thomas, McGarty & Mavor, 2009). So far, there is only limited evidence that pity can help efforts to reduce socio-economic and political disadvantage. Therefore, we ask whether pity for a disadvantaged outgroup can motivate solidarity-based collective action by advantaged group members.

### **Forms and Targets of Supportive Behavior**

Ally collective action is conducted in political solidarity with another group (Becker, 2012). Collective action usually refers to activism in the form of political protests, such as signing petitions or participating in demonstrations with the goal of social change (van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Such forms of action may help overturn inequality and produce long-term change, therefore we also refer to them as political action (Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2006; Thomas & McGarty, 2018, refer to this as *activist support*; Van de Vyver & Abrams (2017) refer to this as *justice relevant prosocial action*). In contrast, intergroup helping or donation is a form of support with little social change potential that may even contribute to maintaining the status quo (see e.g.

Nadler, 2002; Thomas & McGarty, 2018, refer to this as *benevolent support*; Van de Vyver & Abrams, 2017, refer to this as *benevolence relevant prosocial action*). Studies of ally collective action mainly focus on activism on behalf of groups that are targets of prejudice, discrimination, and (political) threats but do not necessarily face disadvantage in economic terms (for example sexual minorities in Western countries, who are diverse in socio-economic status [SES]). In contrast, studies of volunteerism focus on economic rather than political (civic, or human rights) disadvantages (e.g. the poor, homeless people, and victims of humanitarian crises, Kende, 2016; Thomas, Mavor, & McGarty, 2012).

We focus on groups that suffer both economic deprivation (such as a lower SES, lack of resources, poor housing and health conditions), and political disadvantages (such as violation of their rights, discrimination, and lack of respect). Such groups tend to be perceived as vulnerable, in need of help and dependent of care. They tend to evoke prosocial emotions in members of advantaged groups, such as sympathy or pity that motivate supportive behavior (Alphen, Dijker, Bos, van den Borne, & Curfs, 2011). Advantaged group members can show support for such groups either by fulfilling their material needs by donations, volunteerism, and charitable acts or by engaging in political action as allies to gain political recognition, fight injustices, and achieve change in the intergroup status quo (Marullo, & Edwards, 2000; Radke, Kutlaca, Siem, Wright, & Becker, in press). In this context, the distinction between prosocial emotions and outrage, and between benevolent and activist support (Thomas & McGarty, 2018) is blurred because motivations of alleviating the suffering of the disadvantaged group and fighting the structural injustice can co-exist (Becker, Ksenofontov, Siem, & Love, 2018; Kende, Lantos, Belinszky, Csaba, & Lukács, 2017).

### **Intergroup Emotions toward the Disadvantaged**

In response to perceived injustice, intergroup emotions have a regulatory function of intergroup behavior, that is, specific action tendencies are linked to the experience of different specific emotion (Halperin, 2014; Mackie, Silver, & Smith, 2004). Groups elicit different intergroup emotions depending on the type of disadvantage they suffer which can lead to different behavioral intentions toward them. On the one hand, perceived intergroup injustice toward politically disadvantaged groups (e.g. the violation of human rights) typically elicits anger (Becker, Tausch, & Wagner, 2011; Montada & Schneider, 1989) or outrage (Leach et al., 2002; Thomas & McGarty, 2009). Outrage is a politicized emotion in response to the violation of moral convictions (van Zomeren, Postmes, Spears, & Bettache, 2011), therefore it fosters collective action (Thomas & McGarty, 2009).

Injustice appraisals can not only stem from perceived grievances of political oppression, but can be responses to the needs and deprivation of economically disadvantaged groups, which usually lead to prosocial emotions of empathy, sympathy or pity, typically eliciting prosocial behavior, such as helping (see the BIAS map, Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2007). We propose to go beyond the dichotomy of outrage and collective action, versus prosocial emotion and intergroup helping link, and suggest that the prosocial emotion of pity might be just as genuine and adequate emotional response when it comes to outgroups that suffer from both economic and political hardships, hence a predictor of collective action similarly to outrage.

### **Pity as a “Good Enough” Emotion on behalf of the Economically Deprived**

Pity is an other-focused emotion in response to the perceived distress of someone in need. It is a negative emotional state, a result of a downward comparison which reflects a status difference between the self and the other (Smith, 2000). Pity, similarly to other

prosocial emotions, like sympathy or compassion can be connected to an increased arousal in response to the suffering of others. The more serious the perceived disadvantage is, the more likely advantaged group members experience prosocial emotions (Dijker & Koomen, 2010). According to the stereotype-content model, outgroups considered high in warmth, but low in competence (as a result of perceived vulnerability) tend to evoke the emotional response of pity (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2007). In line with this, the theory of vulnerability-based morality suggests that groups in need induce higher vulnerability appraisals based on specific cues, inducing moral emotions, such as sympathy. Such emotions usually lead to an evolutionary care mechanism to support the group by any possible means (Dijker, 2014).

Our goal in the present paper was to compare the prosocial emotion of pity to outrage in their potential to predict collective action on behalf of groups with different types of disadvantages. In many previous studies about the implications of prosocial emotions on intergroup behavior, pity, sympathy, and empathy were used interchangeably (e.g. Boler, 1997; Wispé, 1986), which makes it hard to disentangle the functions of each emotions. In our theorizing, pity is different from empathy, as pity is related to a clear distinction between the self and the other, while empathy is a result of an identification with the other (Thomas et al., 2009). It is even more challenging to disentangle pity from sympathy. Leach and colleagues (2002) proposed that sympathy is a result of the appraisal of the intergroup situation as illegitimate and stable, while pity is based on the appraisal of legitimate and stable situation without much prospect for social change. In contrast, outrage has been identified as the strongest mobilizing emotion, as it is an emotional response to an illegitimate and unstable situation. We argue that indeed pity comes as a response to a stable status difference, but we question the assumption that pity is related to the legitimization of the status difference, and therefore unrelated to social change motivations.

Nevertheless, we differentiated between pity and sympathy, as the latter involves a dual focus and perceived similarity of the self and the other. For example, sympathy includes pity for the other's suffering and a worry if one can avoid a similar situation (Smith, 2000). Pity, in contrast, is a clearly other-focused emotion, when someone feels sorrow about the misfortune of others (Lazarus, 1991; Weiner, 1986), therefore we found it a relevant emotion in connection with economically marginalized outgroups from the perspective of advantaged participants.

### **Pity and Behavioural Intentions**

Pity can lead to action for both egoistic and altruistic reasons. When pity is connected to an increased arousal that people aim to reduce by alleviating the suffering of others (Dijker, 2001; Wispé, 1991), this can be understood as a self-focused or egoistic motivation. In contrast, according to the Batsonian view, "empathic concern" motivates altruistic behavior without egoism (Batson, 2010; Batson, & Ahmad, 2009). In this sense empathic concern does not require identification with the other (in contrast to other, abovementioned interpretation of empathy). The perception of others' needs leads to the impetus to act (Batson, Ahmad, & Stocks, 2004), in line with our conceptualization of pity.

Florian, Mikulincer, and Hirschberger (1999) explored three different facets of pity from the perspective of focus and action: self- other and double- focus. Self-focus and double focus (on self and the other) had negative consequences for behavioral outcomes (e.g. avoidance) whereas pity with other- focus was related to altruistic attitudes and behavior. Another study differentiated between altruistic (selfless) and cynical (self-focused) pity, highlighting that focus on the other (and not on the self) is linked to altruistic behavior (Lunardo, & Bezençon, 2015). This evidence suggests that pity can involve an other-oriented, altruistic component.

We propose that when economic deprivation of a group is inevitable, pity is an adequate, “good enough” intergroup emotion by higher status group members in terms of mobilizing them for supportive action. As with other prosocial emotions, such as sympathy that has been linked to collective action, pity is also a possible predictor not only of donations, but also political action on behalf of economically and politically marginalized groups (e.g. poor people or refugees). In contrast, in relation to politically disadvantaged groups (e.g. sexual minorities), in the absence of economic hardships, and with a smaller status difference between advantaged and disadvantaged groups, pity is less adequate and less tailored to the needs of these groups, and therefore a more paternalistic emotional response. However, previous studies hardly investigated the possible role of pity in collective action. Besides the role of anger and outrage, only sympathy and empathy were identified as antecedents of collective action (Fernando, Kashima, & Laham, 2014; Harth, Kessler, & Leach, 2008; Leach et al., 2002; Saab, Tausch, Spears, & Cheung, 2015).

### **Hypotheses**

We expect that the presence or absence of economic disadvantage influence the perception, emotion and action intention of potential allies. Our question is whether pity can be a mobilizing emotional response for ally collective action on behalf of economically disadvantaged outgroups,. We assume that these groups will be perceived to be vulnerable based on their economic deprivation, and they induce genuine prosocial emotions that can motivate ally behaviors both in the form of donation and collective action.

1. Injustice awareness about economically and politically marginalized groups would have an indirect effect via both outrage and pity on behavioural intentions.



2. We expected that pity- similarly to outrage- would predict both donation and collective action intentions on behalf of groups that are both economically and politically disadvantaged.
3. Pity would be a weaker predictor compared to outrage of collective action intention on behalf of groups that are politically disadvantaged, but economically not deprived.

In sum, disadvantage type (economic/political versus only political) would moderate the effect of pity on collective action intention, with a similar effect of pity and outrage on collective action intention where considering combined economic and political disadvantage, and a smaller effect of pity compared to outrage in response to political disadvantage. For a visual demonstration of our predictions, see *Figure 1*.

### **Overview of the Studies**

We conducted a survey in Hungary related to the Roma minority (Study 1) and replicated our findings in connection with refugees in Germany (Study 2a), and in Hungary (Study 2b). We tested our predictions with the politically disadvantaged, but economically not deprived gay group in Hungary (Study 3). Finally, we conducted an experiment in which we compared the role of pity in ally collective action on behalf of an economically and politically versus a politically disadvantaged fictitious group (Study 4).

### **Study 1**

Roma people constitute the largest ethnic minority group in Hungary (Council of Europe, 2012). They are targets of discrimination, affected by poverty and unemployment and subject to demographic and institutional segregation (Farkas, 2014; Feischmidt, Szombati, & Szuhay, 2013). Anti-Roma prejudice is widespread and often blatantly expressed (Kende, Hadarics, & Lášticová, 2017). In this context, positive attitudes and engagement in pro-social

action is counter-normative and highly politicized. Because of the structural disadvantages of the Roma, allies are important in fulfilling the group's material needs and participating in their political struggles.

## Method

**Participants and Procedure.** We conducted an online survey in 2016 as part of an omnibus research in Hungary ( $N = 1007$ ). Participants were recruited by a survey company that offered a raffle price for participation. We used a multi-step, proportionally stratified sampling method of an online participant pool resulting in a sample demographically similar to the Hungarian population in terms of age, gender, and type of settlement, however they were somewhat higher educated than average.  $N = 1000$  is typically used in opinion poll surveys relying on representative samples of Hungarian society (see Poll of polls, 2018). The language of the questionnaire was Hungarian. Based on the outlier analysis of SPSS, we had no outliers or extreme responses from the mean of either of the variables used in the path model.<sup>1</sup>

Fifty-one percent of participants were women, mean age was 41.5 ( $SD = 13$ ) years; 39% had a higher education degree, 46.1 % finished secondary school, 2.9% did not finish secondary school and 11.6 % chose "other" option; 19% lived in Budapest, 54% in smaller towns, and 27% in a village.

We conducted all the statistical analysis using IBM SPSS version 22.0 and AMOS (Arbuckle, 2011). We report all measures and data exclusions related to the research question. We conducted the studies with the IRB approval of *anonymous* University. The manuscript adheres to ethical guidelines specified in the APA Code of Conduct as well as author's

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<sup>1</sup> We used a boxplot which indicates interquartile range (IQR) computed from Tukey's hinges. Values between 1.5 and 3 IQR from the end of the box indicates outliers, and over 3 IQR indicates extreme responses.

national ethics guidelines. Data accessibility will be ensured in a repository of the osf.io website.<sup>2</sup>

**Measures.** We used brief self-report measures on appraisals, emotions and action intentions. In all measures 7-point Likert type- scales were used (from 1 = completely disagree to 7 = completely agree), unless otherwise indicated. The list of all items are presented in Appendix A. Injustice awareness was measured by two items.<sup>3</sup> Emotions were measured by single items in the following way: “*If you think of the situation of Roma in Hungary, to what extent do you feel...? Pity; Outrage*” (we translated the Hungarian word “sajnálát” as pity throughout). Donation intentions were measured by two items and collective action by four items.

## Results

**Descriptive Statistics.** Injustice awareness, pity, outrage, donation intentions and collective action intentions were low suggesting overall negative attitudes toward the Roma. All the variables were correlated with a medium to large effect size, except for the correlation between outrage and donation intentions that was nonsignificant. For scale reliabilities, means and correlations between variables, see Table 1.

**Hypothesis Testing.** To test the connection between injustice awareness, emotions, and behavioral intentions, we used path analysis, which is an extension of multiple linear regression allowing the test of indirect or mediated effects (Streiner, 2006), enabling us to test

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<sup>2</sup> The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

<sup>3</sup> A limitation to this measure is that injustice perception is not explicit in these items, only a perception of outgroup disadvantage. However, in the hostile intergroup context in which the study was conducted where the majority of the population shows blatant prejudice, we expected that the acknowledgement of outgroup disadvantage inherently expresses injustice appraisal, therefore we handled this measure as equivalent to the injustice awareness measures of the other studies, and they functioned very similarly indeed.

our hypothesized linear model. We did not rely on latent variable models, because each construct was measured by a single scale or item.

We worked with the assumption that all variables would be associated, however, we expected that their connections would have different magnitude. We applied the model building – model trimming technique (see e.g. Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005), with a Maximum Likelihood estimation method. We first built a saturated model and trimmed (or erased) non-significant paths to build a model that reflects our data in the most parsimonious way. We conducted data imputation to substitute missing values for the mediation analysis, so we tested if pity and outrage function as mediators between injustice awareness and behavioural intentions.

Additionally, we conducted a direct comparison between the outrage - collective action intentions path and the pity — collective action intentions path, to test if there is a significant difference between the emotions as predictors. In addition, to test the special importance of the path between pity and collective action, we erased this path with the expectation that model fit would deteriorate.

The path between outrage and donation intention was not significant in the first model ( $B = -.04$ ;  $SE = 0.03$ ;  $p = .105$ ;  $\beta = -.05$ ), and therefore removed. The trimmed model showed good fit to our data (see Table 3). Injustice awareness more strongly predicted pity ( $B = 0.55$ ;  $SE = .03$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .54$ ) than outrage ( $B = .27$ ;  $SE = .03$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .25$ ). Injustice awareness was directly connected to both collective action intentions ( $B = .29$ ;  $SE = 0.02$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .36$ ) and donation intentions ( $B = 0.26$ ;  $SE = 0.03$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .26$ ). Pity was even stronger ( $B = 0.23$ ;  $SE = 0.03$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .28$ ) predictor of collective action than outrage ( $B = 0.09$ ;  $SE = 0.02$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .12$ ). Donation intention was predicted only by pity ( $B = 0.39$ ;  $SE = .03$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .40$ ). Pity and outrage had a positive connection ( $\beta = .34$ ;  $p < .001$ ); and

collective action intentions and donation intentions, too ( $\beta = .48$ ;  $p < .001$ ). For a visual presentation of our results, see *Figure 2*.

To reveal whether intergroup emotions would convey an indirect effect of injustice awareness on donation and collective action intentions, a mediation analysis was conducted with the bootstrapping technique suggested by Macho and Ledermann (2011), where we requested 95% confidence intervals using 2000 re-samples. We found that both pity and outrage were significant mediators between injustice awareness and collective action intentions. For the results of the mediation analysis, see Table 2.

The path between outrage and collective action intention was significantly weaker than between pity and collective action intention ( $t = 4.41$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$ ). When we removed the path between pity and collective action intention, model fit indices were worsened significantly (for fit indices of the original model and without the path between feeling pity and collective action, see Table 3). All models reported in the paper have been identified (with degrees of freedom equal to or higher than zero).

### **Discussion of Study 1**

Our hypothesis that injustice awareness had an indirect effect via pity and outrage on donation and collective action intentions, was supported. Outrage and collective action were strongly correlated in previous studies (Thomas & McGarty, 2009), where the target groups were socially and politically disadvantaged, but not necessarily economically deprived. In this study, however, pity as an expression of the acknowledgement of economic deprivation was the stronger predictor of these actions. This may be explained by the lack of injustice scenario (that is common in collective action research) in this study that could have evoked outrage, whereas the other-focused emotion of pity could be more generally present among participants.

## Study 2

We intended to replicate our findings in connection with refugees in Germany and in Hungary. Similarly to the Roma, refugees in Europe need the assistance of volunteers to fulfill their basic needs for resources and safety, but they also need the political support in the representation of their interests. Refugees have multiple disadvantages, such as linguistic difficulties, lacking documents of professional qualifications, and relevant work experience (Trines, 2017), being targets of prejudice (see e.g. Osborne, 2016; von der Mark, 2016). The pro-refugee movement underlines that people can engage in pro-social action on behalf of refugees, both in the forms of donations and volunteering and political activism (Hamann & Karakayali, 2016).

We collected data from a German sample in Study 2a to improve the generalizability of our findings by looking at a different societal context in which pro-social intentions were more widespread and normative (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011). At the time of our data collection in 2016, the official policy regarding refugees in Germany was mostly accepting, and pro-refugee volunteers acted in line with dominant social norms of the country (Verkaik, 2017). In Study 2b our goal was to replicate 2a with a representative sample in the Hungarian context where, in contrast to Germany, the government took an openly hostile stance against refugees and immigrants. Given the different sampling strategies our focus here is on comparing relationships not mean levels of responses.

### Method

**Participants and Procedure.** In Study 2a, data were collected at a German university with the assistance of students in 2016 by an online survey using convenience sampling ( $N = 191$ ). We found no outliers based on the outlier analysis of SPSS from the mean of variables used in the path model.

Fifty percent of participants were women, and their mean age was 36.9 ( $SD = 14$ ) years; 43.5 % had secondary school degree, 38.2% university degree; 17.6% did not respond. The sample size was suboptimal for a path model, as the optimal number of participants is determined as being higher than 200 (Kline, 2011). However, others suggest that 10:1 ratio of cases to free parameters is acceptable (Bentler & Chou, 1987), especially for simple models as ours. Besides, we had to work with the available data collected at one time point, as the changing political situation and policies did not allow us to extend the data collection period.

In Study 2b we conducted an online survey as part of an omnibus research in Hungary in 2018, relying on a sample recruited with an identical method as in Study 1. The sample was randomly split and the other half of respondents completed a different survey, resulting in  $N = 563$ . Fifty-two percentage of participants were women, their mean age was 41.5 ( $SD = 13$ ) years. 34.3% of participants had a degree in higher education, 62.7 % finished secondary school, 3% had not finished secondary school. 16.3 % lived in Budapest, 54.9 % lived in smaller towns, and 29.1% in a village and 0.7 % abroad.

We had four outliers from the mean of ally collective action intention, but this number was low compared to sample size, so we kept them in the analysis.

**Measures.** All items are presented in Appendix A. Injustice awareness was measured more directly compared to Study 1, by five new items. Pity and outrage were measured with single items again. Donation intention was measured by three items, also more directly. Collective action intention was measured by four items reacting to the following scenario: *“Imagine that a great number of refugees have to move to your neighborhood. What is the likelihood that you would participate in the following actions?”* The response scale in all

measures ranged from 1 = I do not agree at all, to 7 = I completely agree. The language of the questionnaire in Study 2a was German, and in Study 2b it was Hungarian.

### Results of Study 2a

**Descriptive Statistics.** Injustice awareness, and pity were close to the midpoint of the scale, while donation and collective action intentions were low. Outrage about the refugee policy was high. Results showed that all elements of the model were significantly correlated, with outrage as an exception. Outrage was negatively correlated with pity, but it was not associated with any other variables. For scale reliabilities, means, and correlations see Table 4.

**Hypothesis Testing.** Again, we used the model trimming method. Outrage had no significant connections in the model, so we trimmed the non-significant paths between injustice awareness and outrage ( $B = .09$ ;  $SE = .09$ ;  $p = .317$ ;  $\beta = .07$ ), outrage and collective action intentions ( $B = .04$ ;  $SE = 0.04$ ;  $p = .414$ ;  $\beta = .02$ ), and outrage and donation intentions ( $B = .05$ ;  $SE = .04$ ;  $p = .105$ ;  $\beta = .05$ ). The resulting trimmed model, illustrated in *Figure 3*, showed good fit (see Table 3).

Injustice awareness was connected to both collective action intentions ( $B = .82$ ;  $SE = .06$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .66$ ) and donation intentions ( $B = 0.42$ ;  $SE = .06$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .39$ ). Injustice awareness was a strong predictor of pity ( $B = .72$ ;  $SE = .07$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .60$ ), and pity was a stronger predictor of donation intention ( $B = .45$ ;  $SE = .05$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .51$ ) than of collective action intentions ( $B = .27$ ;  $SE = .05$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .26$ ). Pity and outrage had a negative connection ( $\beta = -.34$ ;  $p < .001$ ); and collective action intentions and donation intentions have a positive connection ( $\beta = .28$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Pity was a significant mediator between injustice awareness and collective action intentions (see Table 2).



The path between pity and collective action intention was significantly higher than between outrage and collective action ( $t = 3.82$ ,  $df = 378$ ,  $p < .001$ ). By trimming the path between feeling pity and collective action intention, the model fit significantly decreased (see Table 3).

### Results of Study 2b

**Descriptive Statistics.** All study variables were significantly correlated. Pity and outrage were close to the midpoint, while injustice awareness and behavioral intentions were lower. The correlation between injustice awareness and pity was strong, as the correlation between pity and behavioral intentions, too. The connection between outrage and behavioral intentions were weaker. For scale reliabilities, means and correlations between variables, see Table 5.

**Hypothesis Testing.** All connections between variables were significant, therefore we kept the saturated model with perfect fit this time (see *Figure 4*.) Injustice awareness was connected to both collective action intentions ( $B = .41$ ,  $SE = .01$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .43$ ) and donation intentions ( $B = .52$ ,  $SE = .01$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .46$ ). Pity was a predictor of both donation intentions ( $B = .38$ ,  $SE = .01$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .42$ ) and collective action intentions ( $B = .26$ ,  $SE = .01$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .33$ ). Pity and outrage had a positive connection ( $B = .35$ ,  $SE = .03$   $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .15$ ); and collective action intentions and donation intentions also had a positive connection ( $B = .47$ ,  $SE = .01$   $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .52$ ). Pity, again, was a significant mediator between injustice awareness and collective action intention (see Table 2).

Here too, the path between pity and collective action intentions was stronger than between outrage and collective action ( $t = 17.11$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ). We found a significant decrease in model fit when erasing the path between pity and collective action intentions (see Table 3).

## **Discussion of Study 2**

In both samples, pity was a stronger predictor of collective action intention than outrage was, replicating the pattern in Study 1. The results from a different intergroup context and from two different countries strengthen our assumption that in case of both economically and politically marginalized groups, pity can play an important role in pro-social action.

However, we must note an unexpected finding that in Study 2a outrage had a connection neither with injustice awareness, nor with collective action intention. The most feasible explanation for this result is specific context of Germany at the time of data collection. The item measuring outrage may have been ambiguous because people could perceive the policies as either too supportive or not supportive enough. Unfortunately, we had no way to confirm this interpretation in the current study. In contrast, in Study 2b, outrage was connected to injustice awareness, indicating that outrage about the refugee policy in Hungary reflected a pro-refugee stand among respondents.

## **Study 3**

We contend that the mobilizing function of pity would be different for groups that are politically disadvantaged, but do not suffer severe economic hardships. Therefore, we tested our model in connection with gay people. Sexual minorities, similarly to the Roma and refugees, are targets of social and political disadvantages connected to prejudice and discrimination (Calcagno, 2016; Mallett, Huntsinger, Sinclair, & Swim, 2008), but unlike these groups, they do not uniformly suffer economic deprivation (McGarrity & Huebner, 2013). In line with this, they may be perceived as a more competent and agentic group (see Cuddy et. al., 2007), therefore feeling pity, a reaction to the group's suffering may be less relevant than outrage in predicting collective action intentions. For example, empathy was not a significant mediator between intergroup contact and ally collective action for LGBT people

(Fingerhut, 2011). Furthermore, pity may express undesirable paternalistic attitudes that hinder political action intentions (Russell & Bohan, 2016). In line with this, we altered our prediction of the model in relation to support for gay people. We maintained our prediction regarding injustice awareness, but expected that outrage would predict collective action intentions more strongly than pity.

## Method

**Participants and Procedure.** For an estimation of sample size for the path model, G\*Power analysis suggested  $N = 311$  for 95% power to detect a small effect size of Cohen's  $f^2 = .02$  (Cohen, 1988), which we set as the minimum number. We used a university pool consisting of students from all faculties of a state university in Hungary, where they received course credit for participation. We reached a higher sample size than planned ( $N = 475$ ), 76.2% of participants were women, their average age was 21.06 ( $SD = 2.2$ ) years.

**Measures.** Measures were identical to those in Study 2 but tailored to the target group of gay people (see Appendix A). We are aware that the category “gay people” (*melegék* in Hungarian) is restrictive, but decided to use the term which is the most commonly applied label in Hungarian for sexual minorities (used in official publications, in the name of NGOs and a hotline for LGBTQI+ people).

## Results

**Descriptive Statistics.** All variables were significantly correlated, but the connections between pity and behavioral outcomes were weaker, compared to the connections between outrage and behavioral outcomes. For scale reliabilities, means and correlations, see Table 6. There were no outliers and extreme responses.

**Hypothesis Testing.** The only non-significant path we removed from the model was between pity and donation intentions ( $B = 0.07$ ;  $SE = 0.04$ ;  $p = .062$ ;  $\beta = .08$ ). The resulting trimmed model (*Figure 5*) showed good fit to our data (see Table 3).

Injustice awareness was connected to both collective action intentions ( $B = .73$ ;  $SE = 0.05$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .60$ ) and donation intentions ( $B = .48$ ;  $SE = .06$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .42$ ). Outrage was a predictor of both donation intentions ( $B = .24$ ;  $SE = .05$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .25$ ) and collective action intentions ( $B = .23$ ;  $SE = .04$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .23$ ). There was a weak connection between pity and collective action intentions ( $B = .05$ ;  $SE = .02$ ;  $p = .033$ ;  $\beta = .05$ ). Pity and outrage had a positive connection ( $B = .58$ ;  $SE = .10$   $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .26$ ); and collective action intentions and donation intentions too ( $B = .96$ ;  $SE = .08$   $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .65$ ). Injustice awareness had a significant effect on collective action intention via both pity and outrage. For the mediation analysis, see Table 2.

The path between outrage and collective action intentions was significantly stronger, compared to the path between pity and collective action intentions ( $t = 3.75$ ,  $df = 946$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This time, when erasing the path between pity and collective action intention, there was no significant decrease in model fit, in contrast to all previous models with economically disadvantaged target groups (see Table 3).

### **Discussion of Study 3**

As expected, outrage was a stronger predictor of behavioral intentions than pity in the context of relations to gay people. Surprisingly, outrage was not only a predictor of collective action intentions, but also of donation intentions, while this connection was not present in the models of marginalized groups of Study 1 and 2. This suggests that among those reporting outrage, both forms of action can express support on behalf of the outgroup.

Injustice awareness had a weaker connection to pity and pity did not relate to donation intentions, which suggests in this particular intergroup context, pity is not linked to donation intentions. Compared to the previous studies pity had a much smaller role in predicting behavioral outcomes, as indicated by the lack of significant decrease in model fit after removing this path from the model.

#### **Study 4**

In studies 1-3 we examined the connection between pity and collective action intentions compared to outrage in connection with different groups using cross-sectional survey data. The strength of our surveys was that we measured attitudes and action intentions toward real groups across different contexts ensuring high external validity. We relied on the assumption that perceived economic hardship is a meaningful source of the difference when it comes to the role of pity in mobilization. However, we did not directly measure whether the difference was connected to the groups experiencing different forms of disadvantages. In a new study we wanted to demonstrate that the different functions of pity on ally action are indeed dependent on the type of disadvantage. Furthermore, we did not have evidence about the causal relationship between pity and collective action intentions. Using an experimental design we could test perceptions of a causal connection between emotion and action. Furthermore, we extended the measure of pity from a one-item measure to three items, so we could test the effect of different but related emotion labels.

In our study we manipulated a) the type of disadvantage and b) the emotional reaction of a fictitious ally to economic and political versus only political disadvantage. We tested participants' attributed action intention to the fictitious ally, which highlighted their expectations how emotions and behavioural intentions are related in specific contexts. We

also tested their own emotional reaction to the situation and their consequent ally collective action intentions.

### **Hypotheses**

In line with our overall hypothesis, but adapted to the specific procedure of the experiment, we expected that when participants had to evaluate a fictitious character's ally action intentions in a situation in which the outgroup was only politically disadvantaged, they would attribute higher collective action intentions when the character showed outrage and lower intentions when he showed pity. However, we expected no differences between pity and outrage in their effect on collective action intentions when the outgroup was both economically and politically disadvantaged (H1). We also expected that their own emotional reaction of outrage, but not pity, would predict intentions to engage in ally action when the outgroup is politically (but not economically) disadvantaged, but no such differences would be found when the outgroup is both politically and economically disadvantaged (H2).

### **Method**

**Procedure.** In an online experiment, participants were randomly assigned into one of four conditions based on disadvantage type (economic and political versus political) and emotion (pity versus outrage). We introduced an imaginary country, Anduria, where there is a divide between city and village inhabitants. Villagers suffer either economic (deprivation of basic needs) and political disadvantages (violation of rights) at the same time, or only political disadvantages (for a detailed description of the vignettes see Appendix B). We framed our story as a news item, accompanied by an illustration that was shared on Facebook by an Andurian citizen from the city (i.e., a potential ally to village inhabitants). To manipulate the emotions related to the story, the Andurian citizen shared the news with a comment that stated

either his pity or outrage about the situation. To reinforce the message, the comment was followed either by a sad or an angry emoji.

**Participants.** For an estimation of sample size for the path model, we relied on the same calculation as in Study 3, but we aimed to reach as high sample size as possible to increase the reliability of the results. First, we recruited participants on Facebook ( $n = 287$ ) and offered a raffle price of vouchers of 12.000 HUF (37 Euros). We posted the call on Facebook pages and groups. Second, we recruited participants from a university course ( $n = 316$ ).

We had 304 participants in the *economic and political* condition, and 299 participants in the *political* condition, reaching a total  $N = 603$ . We excluded only those participants who quit the questionnaire before responding to our main outcome measure, ally collective action intention. We had 7 outliers that deviated from the mean of injustice awareness, 11 outliers on the scale of prosocial emotions and no outliers in the scale of outrage. We had 8 outliers in ally collective action, and 5 outliers in donation intentions. As the sample size was big enough, we kept them in the analysis.

Seventy four percent of participant (449) were women, and 25% men (140), 14 did not report their gender or chose “other”. The vast majority of respondents were university students. The average age was 26.2 years ( $SD = 9.8$ ). The majority of respondents, 49.8% were from the capital, and 34.3% came from another city or town, and 14.3 % from a village.<sup>4</sup>

**Measures.** We used a manipulation check to test if participants identified economic and political disadvantage in each condition. We also used an attention check question to see

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<sup>4</sup> As those living in villages might be more personally involved by our fictitious scenario, we conducted a T-test if there is a difference based on the residential status of participants in injustice awareness, emotions and collective action intentions, but we did not find any difference between groups.

if respondents could recall our fictitious character's emotional reaction. Injustice awareness was measured by the same four items as in Study 3, tailored to the fictitious scenario.

We asked about emotional response in the following way “*Imagine that you are also a citizen of Anduria living in one of the main cities. If you think of the situation of village inhabitants to what extent do the following emotions describe what you feel?*”, we listed pity, sadness, and sympathy. Pity was previously conceptualized as having the element of sadness, according to multiple authors, such as Cuddy and colleagues (2007, p:635), stating that pity consists of compassion and sadness. A study by Florian, Mikulincer, & Hirschberger (1999) also empirically supported that the experience of pity was highly related to sadness and sorrow, but also to sympathy. We expected that sympathy is a somewhat more positive emotion compared to pity, but this measure allowed us to test the effects of the different emotion labels separately, and also as aggregated variables. We also created a scale for outrage, using the words anger, wrath, and outrage.

We first asked about how the fictitious character would act. We used the same collective action and donation measures as in Study 2 and 3 and tailored them to the context of Anduria. Finally, we asked participants about their own collective action and donation intentions if they were city inhabitants of Anduria. For scale reliabilities, see Table 7. For the list of items tailored to the experiment, see Appendix A.

## Results

**Attention and Manipulation Checks.** We did not find a difference in the perception of political disadvantage between the conditions (Economic condition:  $M = 6.25$ ,  $SD = .87$ ; Political condition:  $M = 6.24$ ,  $SD = .93$ ,  $t(596) = .22$ ,  $p = .825$ ), but we did in the perception of economic disadvantage (Economic condition:  $M = 6.25$   $SD = .74$ ; Political condition:  $M =$



3.69,  $SD = 1.55$ ,  $t(596) = 25.76$ ,  $p < .001$ ). We found no differences in injustice awareness between the economic and political and only political conditions, we had a ceiling effect in both cases (Economic condition:  $M = 6.01$ ,  $SD = .84$ ; Political condition:  $M = 6.03$ ,  $SD = .87$ ,  $t(594) = 1.05$ ,  $p = .294$ ).

Attention checks showed that not all participants noticed the manipulated emotions or could recall them correctly. In the pity condition, 20 (6.3%) wrongly indicated outrage and 53 (16.7 %) could not recall the emotion. In the outrage condition, 17 (5.9%) wrongly indicated pity, and 36 (12.5%) could not recall the emotion. Four (1.3%) participants' responses were missing in both conditions. As 134 out of 603 participants could not precisely indicate the appropriate emotion, we tested our hypotheses with the exclusion of these people. This left us with a sample of 469 participants, 240 in the pity, and 229 in the outrage condition.

**Descriptive Statistics.** For means, standard deviations and correlations in the full sample, see Table 7. Attributed collective action and donation intentions were high overall, and participants' own action intentions were somewhat lower, but still above the midpoint. Injustice awareness was very high, corresponding to our goal to present a story with high level of injustice. Attributed action intentions to the fictitious character strongly correlated with participant's own action intentions. Injustice awareness and own emotions were strongly associated with participant's own action intentions, and only weakly connected to attributed action intentions.

**Hypothesis Testing with ANOVA and Planned Comparisons.** As we expected that the emotion manipulations would have an effect on the attribution of behavioural intention to the fictitious character (but not on participants' own collective action), we conducted two-way ANOVA for the effect of disadvantage type (economic and political versus only

political) and emotion (pity versus outrage) on attributed collective action intention. We found no significant main effect of disadvantage type, reinforcing that the two scenarios did not differ in their mobilization for collective action. There was a significant main effect of emotion on collective action intentions. We found no interaction effect between disadvantage type and emotion. For donation intentions, both the main effect of disadvantage type and emotion was significant, but there was no interaction between conditions. For results of the ANOVA, see Table 8.

We conducted planned comparisons between the emotion conditions to compare the effects on attributed collective action, separately within the economic scenario, and within the political scenario. We chose paired comparisons, because our hypotheses focused on the comparison of the two emotions in the two contexts independently.

There was no difference in attributed collective action intention between the pity condition and outrage condition in the economic disadvantage scenario. In the political scenario, attributed collective action intention was higher in the outrage condition compared to the pity condition.<sup>5</sup> For descriptive statistics and results of the T-tests, see Table 9.

In summary, ANOVA analysis highlighted that pity and outrage had significantly different effects on attributed collective action, and planned comparisons specified that the difference was significant only in the political, but not in the economic condition. We expected the changing role of pity and the same role of outrage throughout the contexts, therefore we did not expect and did not find an interaction between disadvantage type and

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<sup>5</sup> We ran the t-tests without the removal of participants who failed the manipulation check as well, and received similar results as in the full sample, no difference in collective action intention between pity and outrage in the economic condition (Pity:  $M = 4.98$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ; Outrage:  $M = 5.02$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ,  $t(302) = -.351$ ,  $p = .726$ , Cohen's  $d = .04$ ), and a significant difference between emotions in the political condition (Pity:  $M = 4.77$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ; Outrage:  $M = 5.19$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ,  $t(297) = -3.12$ ,  $p = .002$ , Cohen's  $d = .37$ ).

emotion. In line with our expectation, donation intentions were higher in response to the economic/political disadvantage scenario.

**Hypothesis Testing with Path Analysis.** Based on participants' own reaction to the economic and political versus political scenarios, we built the model the same way as in Studies 1–3, where injustice awareness predicted behavioural intentions of donation and collective action, and the connection occurred via pity and outrage.

First, we tested whether participants' own emotional responses were independent from the manipulation. Respondents' own emotions were not affected by the presented emotional response of the fictitious ally (Pity:  $t(594) = .184$ ,  $p = .854$ ; Outrage:  $t(594) = -1.13$ ,  $p = .261$ ). Based on the random assignment and the lack of effect of this manipulation on their own emotional reaction, we were confident to compare the role of their own emotional responses in predicting their own action intention responses. We conducted separate analyses on the subsamples in the combined economic and political and in the political only conditions.

First, we conducted the analysis with single item emotion measures (outrage and pity), similarly to the four correlational studies. Then, we used the 3 item-scale for prosocial emotions and conducted the same path analysis. We conducted additional analysis for comparison with each single item (sadness, sympathy alone), and with combined items (pity/sadness and pity/sympathy, as a scale). We reported our results in the Supplementary material.

***Path analysis with the 1 item measure (pity).*** In the economic disadvantage condition, there were two non-significant paths: between injustice awareness and collective action intention ( $B = .09$ ;  $SE = .08$ ;  $p = .277$ ;  $\beta = .06$ ), injustice awareness and donation intention ( $B = -.06$ ;  $SE = .09$ ;  $p = .530$ ;  $\beta = -.04$ ), therefore we trimmed these two paths.

The trimmed model had good fit indices (*see* Table 3). Both emotions were significant predictors of behavior intentions, but unlike the pattern in correlational data, outrage was a stronger predictor of collective action intention than pity. Pity, however, was a stronger predictor of donation intention than outrage. For the results of the mediation analysis, see Table 2.

In the political disadvantage condition, there were three non-significant paths: between injustice awareness and collective action intention ( $B = .06$ ;  $SE = .07$ ;  $p = .385$ ;  $\beta = .05$ ), injustice awareness and donation intention ( $B = -.04$ ;  $SE = .09$ ;  $p = .674$ ;  $\beta = -.03$ ) and between pity and donation intention ( $B = .09$ ;  $SE = .06$ ;  $p = .131$ ;  $\beta = .09$ ).

The trimmed model had good fit indices ( $\chi^2 = 3.55$ ;  $df = 3$ , CFI = .999, NFI = .992., RMSEA = .025). Both emotions were significant predictors of behavior intentions, but in line with our prediction, outrage was a stronger predictor of collective action intention than pity. Donation was only predicted by outrage, but not by pity.

***Path analysis with a 3-item measure (pity, sympathy, sadness).*** In the economic disadvantage condition, there were three non-significant paths we trimmed: between injustice awareness and collective action intention ( $B = .06$ ;  $SE = .08$ ;  $p = .430$ ;  $\beta = .05$ ), injustice awareness and donation intention ( $B = -.11$ ;  $SE = .09$ ;  $p = .219$ ;  $\beta = -.07$ ), and outrage and donation intention ( $B = .07$   $SE = .06$ ;  $p = .225$ ;  $\beta = .08$ ). The model had good fit indices (*see* Table 3). Both emotions were significant predictors of behavior intentions, but pity more strongly predicted collective action intention than outrage. Pity was also a stronger predictor of donation intention than outrage. For the results of the mediation analysis, see Table 2.

In the political disadvantage condition, we trimmed the two non-significant paths between injustice awareness and collective action intention ( $B = .10$ ;  $SE = .07$ ;  $p = .176$ ;  $\beta = .072$ ) and between injustice awareness and donation intentions ( $B = -.092$ ;  $SE = .090$ ;  $p =$

.308;  $\beta = -.06$ ), and the resulting model had a good model fit (see Table 3). In this condition, outrage was a stronger predictor of collective action intention than pity. Outrage was also a stronger predictor of donation intention, than pity. For the results of the mediation analysis, see Table 2. For a summary of findings of the path models (with 1 and 3-item measures), see *Figure 6*.

In the additional path analyses with the different combinations of items, we found that two-item combinations (pity, sympathy and pity, sadness) provided the same pattern as the three-item solution. However, the one-item sadness measure (similarly to the one-item pity measure) was a weaker predictor of collective action intention compared to outrage, but the one-item sympathy measure was stronger, than outrage, on behalf of economically disadvantaged groups. The pattern for politically disadvantaged groups were more uniform (outrage being stronger than prosocial emotions). For the path models, see the Supplementary material.

**Comparison of paths.** We compared the emotion- behavioral intention paths using the 3-item scales for both pity and outrage. In the economic scenario, the path between pity and collective action intentions was stronger compared to the path between outrage and collective action intentions, ( $t = 2.11$ ,  $df = 604$ ,  $p = .03$ ) while the opposite pattern occurred in the political scenario ( $t = 2.43$ ,  $df = 594$ ,  $p = .02$ ). Erasing the path between pity and collective action intention deteriorated the model fit significantly in the economic scenario, while it changed fit indices to a smaller extent in the political scenario (with still a significant change in Chi square, but an acceptable CFI and NFI). For the comparison of fit indices, see Table 3.

#### **Discussion of Study 4**

In line with our predictions, we found that pity and outrage were equally relevant emotions in the mobilization for collective action and donation in case of an economically and

politically disadvantaged outgroup. In contrast, in case of an outgroup that was only politically, but not economically disadvantaged, outrage was a stronger predictor for collective action intention than pity. This pattern was identified in the action intentions attributed to the fictitious character, in line with findings of Study 1, 2 and 3.

When we looked at participants' own action intentions, the role of pity in comparison to other prosocial emotions showed a more nuanced picture. In the path analysis, pity, measured by a single item, was a weaker predictor of collective action, compared to outrage on behalf economically disadvantaged groups. However, pity with sympathy and sadness became a stronger predictor than outrage, but only in the economic scenario, consistent with the results of Studies 1 and 2. In the political scenario, such nuances between prosocial emotions did not appear, as pity, sympathy, and sadness were uniformly less relevant in mobilization for collective action compared to outrage.

The inconsistent finding with the single item pity measure raises the question, why this emotion functioned differently in the real life (Study 1 and 2) versus in the fictitious scenario (Study 4). A possible explanation is that in studies 1 and 2, the only prosocial emotion we "offered" to participants was pity, while in Study 4, we assessed pity, sympathy, and sadness one after the other, which might have led to a contrast effect, and a preference for sympathy compared to pity (even in line with social desirability). However, when pity was combined with either sympathy or sadness or both, we again found consistent results, which suggests that even if these emotions are distinguishable, they are closely related.

A limitation of this study is that we cannot completely clarify the difference between sympathy and pity, but we could highlight the mobilization potential of these prosocial emotions for economically disadvantaged, but not for politically disadvantaged groups.

Our experiment had some further limitations. Firstly, we did not manipulate participants' own emotions, therefore, our outcome variable was the expected collective action by an ally. By this, we investigated perceptions of normative behaviors depending on the type of disadvantage and emotional reactions of pity vs. outrage. Nevertheless, we could also investigate the connections between participants' own emotions and collective action intentions in light of the type of outgroup disadvantage.

Another problem was that we used images in addition to the description to manipulate the type of disadvantage. By using an image of a child in the economic condition we aimed to reinforce the vignette that also explicitly mentions how children are affected by economic disadvantages, compared to the political condition where children were also mentioned as affected, but on a more abstract level (so we used an abstract image). It is part of our argument that perceived vulnerability accounts for the pity-ally collective action intention link: the more a target group is perceived as being needy and deprived, the more prosocial emotions are evoked, which can motivate supportive behavior in more possible forms (not only as donation, but also as collective action).

However, it can be raised whether purely the description of economic disadvantage or also the image of a child drove the effect of the manipulation. Still, the fact that there was no main effect of disadvantage type on attributed collective action intentions, and no difference in participants' own collective action intentions between scenarios, is in line with the view that the picture did not have a confounding effect on our main dependent variable, collective action intentions. Furthermore, the fact that our results in Study 4 are consistent with the findings in studies 1-3 supports the reliability of findings.

### **General Discussion**

Most collective action studies use small to medium purposive or convenience samples with scenarios involving imagined transgressions in experimental design. A strength of our research is that it investigated ally action intentions with big community samples not only from Western democracies, but also from Eastern Europe. Our main findings were replicated in the German and the Hungarian context, in connection with two real groups, the Roma and refugees. Finally, our findings were supported by an experiment.

Previous research have not addressed the specific conditions under which pity as a prosocial emotion can have a distinguished role in collective action. We argued that toward both economically and politically deprived groups, similarly to outrage, pity leads to prosocial behavioral intentions and even collective action intention, but we did not expect that function of pity for economically not deprived groups. We conducted Study 1 and 2 to test the ally intentions of advantaged group members in intergroup contexts that reflected both large economic and social/political injustices. In Study 3 we contrasted these to a model for a group that was socially and politically but not economically disadvantaged. Finally, in Study 4, we compared the role of pity and outrage toward an economically and politically versus only politically disadvantaged fictitious group in an experiment.

Pity was a stronger predictor of donation intentions than of collective action intentions in all models connected to economically marginalized groups but predicted both behaviors in all cases. In fact, collective action intentions were just as strongly, or even more strongly predicted by pity than by outrage in all three intergroup contexts of Study 1 and 2 (in connection to the Roma and refugees). This pattern was partly found in the scenario of the economically disadvantaged in the experiment of Study 4. We argue that the reason for this is that pity is an adequate emotional response towards groups in need of material resources where allies recognize the injustice of the situation, so prosocial action lead to both ally



collective action and donation intentions. In contrast, Study 3 and the scenario of the politically disadvantaged outgroup in Study 4 demonstrated that pity is less adequate when a group is not economically deprived, but socially and politically disadvantaged, therefore it leads to ally collective action intention to less extent, compared to outrage. In connection with gay people and with the fictitious group in the political disadvantage condition, outrage was a more important predictor of collective action. Outrage about policies is a more adequate response to their disadvantage, compared to feeling pity toward them.

An additional explanation for the stronger effect of pity compared to outrage concerning marginalized outgroups may be that pity is a more sustainable emotion than outrage or anger (Carver & Harmon-Jones, 2009). Prosocial emotions such as pity could be more generally present among members of the advantaged group, as it is an other-focused emotion that could appear even in the absence of a specific reason for grievance (Thomas et al., 2009). Therefore, pity or sympathy can be a useful basis for mobilization on behalf of the severely deprived.

Our findings suggest that in intergroup contexts with large status differences, the main division is not between actions that maintain the status quo by offering “only” donations versus engaging in politicized actions for social change, but rather between acting at all or not doing anything. The social change potential of a specific emotion and action might be dependent on the intergroup context, therefore feeling pity (and giving donation) is not uniformly paternalistic (Becker et al., 2018), it can be an adequate response to a groups’ suffering. Helping in the form of donations based on feelings of pity may be psychologically similar to engagement in political action in these particular intergroup contexts.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

In the present research, we did not focus on the differences between shades of prosocial emotions, which is also an interesting field for future research. We used the Hungarian expression “sajnálát” and the German word “Mitleid” to measure pity, which makes the picture complex. Emotions of sympathy and pity have different meanings in English, and different connotations in other languages (Frijda, Markam, Sato, & Wiers, 1995; Russell, 1991). A recent study highlighted, how much the meaning of emotions is dependent on the traditions of specific language families, and pity is exactly that type of emotion which has different connotations in each context. Pity is closer to grief in Indo-European languages, but it is also related to love in other languages (Jackson et al., 2019). Nevertheless, emotions are not “natural kinds” (i.e., biologically determined), but a result of subjective categorization and social learning (Feldman Barrett, 2006). Our goal in the current study was not to look at the differences between specific prosocial emotions, but to compare the role of pity to outrage in mobilization within specific intergroup contexts.

We used a one-item measure of pity in Studies 1-3, which is a clear limitation of our studies. Therefore, in Study 4, we used not only an item for pity, but added sympathy and sadness, so we could use each item independently and in combination to see how measures influence findings. This left us with mixed results: unlike survey findings, pity alone was not a better predictor for collective action compared to outrage, only when it was used together with sympathy or sadness. This suggests that sympathy was a slightly more mobilizing emotion than pity among participants, and together with pity they were more important predictors of action, than outrage, but only in case of economically disadvantaged groups. Such differences between prosocial emotions did not appear toward politically disadvantaged groups, as they were uniformly weaker predictors in comparison to outrage.

It is important to note that by highlighting the special function of pity toward deprived groups does not mean that we want to promote pity as a mobilizing emotion compared to other prosocial emotions, such as sympathy or empathy. In contrast, we argued that pity can be a “good enough” emotion, as a reflection to an outgroup’s perceived low status, when the outgroup suffers not only socio-political but material disadvantages. We proposed that such perceptions, even without high identification with the outgroup, indicated by sympathy or empathy, can raise pity, which in turn can lead to behavioral intentions on behalf of the outgroup.

Giving a helping hand in the form of either collective action or donations can function as an opportunity for the advantaged to get involved on behalf of the marginalized to restore social justice. Furthermore, mobilizing a wider pool of advantaged group members based on prosocial emotions can be an important step toward achieving the social change that political activists also strive for.

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Table 1

*Scale reliabilities, means, standard deviations and correlations in Study 1 (All scales are 7-point, except where indicated otherwise)*

	Number of items	$\alpha/r$ (in case of two items)	Mean	SD	Correlation				
					1	2	3	4	5
1. Donation intentions	2	.854	3.10	1.80	1	.657**	.480**	.545**	.195**
2. Collective action intentions	4	.891	2.49	1.522		1	.544**	.528**	.311**
3. Injustice awareness	2	.680	3.14	1.886			1	.544**	.254**
4. Pity	1	single item	3.02	1.90				1	.412**
5. Outrage	1	single item	3.46	2.01					1

Note. \*\*  $p < .001$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ .

Table 2

*Results of mediation analysis between injustice awareness, outrage and pity, as mediators and behavioural intentions (collective action and donation)*

Model		<i>B</i>	<i>p</i>	95%CI Lower Bound	95%CI Upper Bound
Study 1 Roma people	Outrage - CA	.03	<.001	.02	.04
	Outrage - Donation	-	-	-	-
	Pity - CA	.12	<.001	.10	.16
	Pity - Donation	.21	<.001	.18	.26
Study 2a Refugees	Outrage - CA	-	-	-	-
	Outrage - Donation	-	-	-	-
	Pity - CA	.20	<.001	.12	.28
	Pity - Donation	.33	<.001	.25	.43
Study 2b Refugees	Outrage - CA	.02	<.001	.01	.03
	Outrage - Donation	.03	.002	.01	.03
	Pity - CA	.21	<.001	.19	.23
	Pity - Donation	.32	<.001	.30	.34
Study 3 Gay people	Outrage - CA	.19	<.001	.16	.21
	Outrage - Donation	.19	<.001	.17	.22
	Pity - CA	.11	<.001	.10	.13
	Pity - Donation	-	-	-	-
Study 4 Economically and politically disadvantaged*	Outrage - CA	.15	.012	.05	.22
	Outrage - Donation	-	-	-	-
	Pity - CA	.22	.014	.13	.32
	Pity -Donation	.36	.007	.25	.50
Study 4 Politically disadvantaged*	Outrage - CA	.32	.005	.24	.44

Outrage - Donation	.25	.008	.14	.38
Pity - CA	.13	.007	.05	.25
Pity - Donation	.11	.080	-.01	.23

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Note. \*We used the three-item pity measure for the mediation analysis.



Table 3

*Changes of the Chi square, degrees of freedom and model indices by erasing the path between pity and collective action intentions in each model*

Model		$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	CFI	NFI	RMSEA	SRMR	$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta df$	<i>p</i> ( $\Delta\chi^2$ -tests)
Study 1 Roma people	Original	2.62	1	.999	.998	.040	.011	80.17	1	<.001
	Erased	82.79	2	.953	.952	.200	.052			
Study 2a Refugees	Original	2.62	3	1	.995	.000	.041	27.62	1	<.001
	Erased	30.23	4	.951	.945	.186	.054			
Study 2b Refugees	Original	.00	0	1	1	.545	.000	714.36	1	<.001
	Erased	714.36	1	1.957	.957	.356	.055			
Study 3 Gay people	Original	3.18	1	.998	.998	.083	.014	4.81	1	.090
	Erased	7.99	2	.996	.995	.076	.021			
Study 4 Economically and politically disadvantaged*	Original	4.82	3	.996	.991	.045	.018	29.8	1	<.001
	Erased	34.62	4	.939	.933	.159	.075			
Study 4 Politically disadvantaged*	Original	4.56	2	.995	.992	.065	.018	9.54	1	.023

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Erased	14.10	3	.979	.974	.111	.037
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Note. \* We used the three-item pity measure.

Table 4

*Scale reliabilities, scale points, means, standard deviations and correlations in Study 2a (All scales are 7-point)*

	Number of items	$\alpha/r$ (in case of two items)	M	SD	Correlation				
					1	2	3	4	5
1. Donation intentions	3	.901	3.30	2.02	1	.738**	.687**	.734**	-.041
2. Collective action intentions	4	.969	3.04	2.32		1	.816**	.650**	.017
3. Injustice awareness	4	.760	3.76	1.88			1	.585**	.072
4. Pity	1	single item	3.98	2.25				1	.231**
5. Outrage	1	single item	5.03	2.20					1

Note. \*\*  $p < .001$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ .

Table 5

*Scale reliabilities, means, standard deviations and correlations in Study 2b (All scales are 7-point)*

	Number of items	$\alpha$	M	SD	Correlation				
					1	2	3	4	5
1. Donation intentions	2	.922	2.92	1.67	1	.793**	.745**	.727**	.450**
2. Collective action intentions	4	.757	2.81	1.35		1	.666**	.629**	.420**
3. Injustice awareness	4	.820	3.29	1.41			1	.636**	.521**
4. Pity	1	single item	3.65	1.84				1	.428**
5. Outrage	1	single item	3.79	1.95					1

Note. \*\*  $p < .001$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

Table 6

*Scale reliabilities, means, standard deviations and correlations in Study 3 (All scales are 7-point)*

	Number of items	$\alpha/r$	M	SD	Correlation				
					1	2	3	4	5
1. Donation intentions	2	.846	3.26	1.73	1	.803**	.594**	.341**	.535**
2. Collective action intentions	4	.757	3.91	1.83		1	.776**	.423**	.654**
3. Injustice awareness	4	.949	4.90	1.51			1	.401**	.674**
4. Pity	1	single item	3.60	1.78				1	.449**
5. Outrage	1	single item	3.82	1.82					1

Note. \*\*  $p < .001$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

Table 7

*Scale reliabilities, means, standard deviations and correlations of all variables in Study 4 (All scales are 7-point)*

	Number of items	$\alpha$	M	SD	Correlation						
					1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Attributed collective action intentions	5	.862	4.99	1.13	1	.589**	.397**	.176**	.283**	.181**	.144*
2. Attributed donation intentions	3	.808	4.77	1.16		1	.249**	.439**	.211**	.177**	.155**
3. Collection action intentions	5	.821	4.63	1.16			1	.561**	.347**	.496**	.542**
4. Donation intentions	3	.798	4.65	1.29				1	.226**	.457**	.405**
5. Injustice awareness	4	.742	6.07	0.86					1	.489**	.473**
6. Pity	3	.801	5.29	1.12						1	.656**

7. Outrage	3	.905	4.66	1.47	1
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Note. \*\*  $p < .001$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

Table 8

*Results of the two-way ANOVA testing the effects of disadvantage type (economic and political vs. political) and emotion (pity vs. outrage) on behavioural intentions*

Collective action intentions (N = 469)

	F	df	p	Partial Eta squared
Economic and political - Political	.026	1	.871	.000
Pity - Outrage	11.85	1	.001	.025
Interaction	.69	1	.407	.001

Donation intentions (N = 469)

	F	df	p	Partial Eta squared
Economic and political - Political	8.57	1	.004	.018
Pity - Outrage	8.10	1	.005	.017
Interaction	.57	1	.450	.001



Table 9

*Planned comparisons between emotions on collective action intentions*

Economic and political (n = 224)		Independent samples T-test					Cohen's d
M	SD	t	df	p			
Pity	4.85	1.15	-1.81	302	.074	.22	
Outrage	5.12	1.25					

  

Political (n = 245)		Independent samples T-test					Cohen's d
M	SD	t	df	p			
Pity	4.78	1.21	-3.11	243	.002	.39	
Outrage	5.22	1.04					