

A simplified picture of the social hierarchy presents it as the relation between a privileged group which defends the status quo and a disadvantaged group which is interested in fighting it. However, in most cases, the reality of intergroup relations is more complex than that. First, even though members of advantaged groups are motivated to maintain social hierarchy some of them actively promote social change. An example of that could be the social campaign He for She, in which men demonstrate their solidarity with women in their struggle for gender equality. Secondly, members of other disadvantaged groups play an important role, as they can either support members of the low status group in their struggle for more equality, act as passive bystanders, or help the advantaged group maintain the status quo. Finally, there are members of low-status groups who choose to act on behalf of the less successful members of their ingroup in spite of having achieved individual success on their own. The last situation is well exemplified by Sheryl Sandberg, who achieved a great success in a male dominated field and then launched the LeanIn movement, which main goal is to inspire women to pursue professional career. These examples of social solidarity provide a more complete picture of relations between dominant and subordinate groups within the social system. However, they also raise the question of what motivates people to engage in such actions despite receiving no apparent gratification and sometimes even acting contrary to their self or group interest and under what conditions they are more willing to do so.

The goal of the current project is to explore possible mechanisms responsible for underdog-solidarity. We suggest three motivational mechanisms responsible for. First, we assume that people help those in a disadvantaged position because they perceive such actions to be in line with their group's interest. Secondly, underdog-solidarity may be a result of identification with the disadvantaged group. When people are emotionally engaged in the outgroup harm, they act on behalf of the outgroup even though they do not see any benefits for their ingroup, because they want to reduce negative emotions resulting from that engagement. Finally, people show solidarity because they care for values such as justice and equality and they react to a perceived violation of those values in a given situation.

One of the important psychological factors that in our opinion differentiates those three motives is their level of abstractness. On the one hand, group-interest is a very specific and concrete motivation. On the other hand, core values such as equality represent a very abstract goal, which can transcend many different intergroup contexts. Drawing on the construal level theory by Trope and Liberman (2010), we assume that any object can be interpreted on various levels of abstractness. It has been showed that the way people construe situations influences their social behavior. We apply this theory to the phenomenon of underdog-solidarity. We hypothesize that the interpretation of the situation of disadvantaged group in an abstract or in a concrete way will activate different motivations leading to intergroup solidarity.

We plan to verify those hypotheses in a series of sixteen experiments. In these studies, we will manipulate the way situation of the disadvantaged groups is presented to participants. For example, we will describe the group disadvantage either in the near future, which should evoke a concrete mindset or in the distant future, which should activate an abstract mindset. We will measure the willingness to show solidarity with the underdog-group. We will also investigate the role of such factors as probability of success of solidarity behavior, time distance to the outcomes of the behavior, and type of disadvantaged groups that needs help. The research will be carried out with regard to a several important social contexts (gender inequalities, sexual minorities, the situation of the Muslim minority and immigrant minorities in the European Union).