

Who is willing to help Ukrainian refugees and why?

**Individual prosocial dispositions and superordinate European identity related to
intergroup helping intentions**

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The data that support the findings of this study are anonymized and openly available in Open Science Framework at https://osf.io/xkrbn/?view_only=51c83cbf202244729b3809f94cecf42

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The authors declare no conflict of interest

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Individual prosocial dispositions and superordinate European identity related to intergroup helping intentions

In 2022, Europe experienced unprecedented citizen mobilizations to help Ukrainian refugees. Based on two parallel scholarship lines, we examined individual prosocial dispositions and superordinate identities related to intentions to help Ukrainians. Employing a French-speaking student sample in Belgium ($N = 374$), in Study 1 we showed that dispositional prosociality and European identification were both positively related to intentions to help Ukrainians. An interaction qualified these main effects, so that highly prosocial European identifiers were particularly willing to help. With a nationwide quota sample of the French-speaking population in Belgium ($N = 371$), in Study 2 we identified two processes mediating the relationship of dispositional prosociality and European identification with intentions to help Ukrainians. On the one hand, dispositional prosociality was positively related to empathy towards Ukrainians, which in turn predicted participants' helping intentions. On the other hand, European identification was positively related to both empathy and identity fusion with Ukrainians, which in turn predicted participants' helping intentions. Overall, these findings suggest that individual prosocial dispositions and superordinate identities represent two cumulative pathways to intergroup helping. Concluding, we discuss common and specific processes related to intentions to help Ukrainians, as compared to other refugee groups.

Keywords

Intergroup helping; Ukrainian refugees; Prosociality; European identity; Superordinate identity; Empathy; Identity fusion

On 24 February 2022, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict that began in 2014 escalated. The invasion of Ukrainian territories caused Europe's fastest-growing refugee inflow since World War II (Pita & Costa, 2022), with millions of Ukrainians fleeing the country and a third of the population displaced (UNHCR, 2022). In the name of unity and common faith between European and Ukrainian people, humanitarian corridors were immediately deployed, and solidarity initiatives multiplied across Europe (Paul, 2022). The vast mobilization of volunteers was unprecedented, highlighting two phenomena of great scientific interest: First, the capacity of civil society to react quickly and extensively to help Ukrainian refugees, and second, the revitalization of European unity in the face of a common enemy.

These two phenomena participate in the growing scholarly debate on the psychological processes favouring intergroup helping (Louis et al., 2019; Van Leeuwen & Zagefka, 2017; Thomas et al., 2009), and pro-refugee mobilizations in particular (e.g., Kende et al., 2017; Politi et al., 2017; Roblain et al., 2020). Contributing to this scientific endeavour, in the present research we build on two frameworks associated with helping: individual prosocial dispositions (e.g., Batson & Powell, 2003; Caprara et al., 2012) and superordinate identities (e.g., Dovidio et al., 1997; Levine & Manning, 2013). Across two studies, we examine if dispositional prosociality and European identification among Western European participants predict intentions to help Ukrainian refugees. Innovatively, we test eventual interactions between prosocial dispositions and European identification, and the indirect effects of both predictors via two mechanisms: empathy and identity fusion with Ukrainians.

Two Research Traditions Associated with Intergroup Helping

Individual Prosocial Dispositions and Helping

People hold different propensities to help others in need, based on stable individual differences in personality traits (Graziano et al., 2007; Habashi et al., 2016), empathy (Batson

et al., 2014; Davis, 1994), and basic individual values (Caprara et al., 2012; Schwartz, 2010). This constellation of psychological variables composes the so-called “prosocial personality”, conceived as a trans-situational altruistic inclination to transcend one’s own interests (see Thielmann et al., 2020 for a meta-analysis). Accordingly, helping seems frequently motivated by altruism, rooted in characteristics of the helper (Batson & Powell, 2003; but see Selvanathan et al., 2020). Differences in individual dispositions have been observed across diverse helping situations, including volunteering (Habashi et al., 2016), donations to disaster victims (Zagefka & James, 2015), bystander responses (Hortensius & de Gelder, 2018), activism and civic engagement (Omoto et al., 2010).

However, hardly any research on individual prosocial dispositions and helping has included clear intergroup differentiations between helpers and help recipients (but see James & Zagefka 2015 for a discussion). As an exception, one recent study provided preliminary evidence that the same prosocial dispositions predicting “bonding” types of prosocial behaviour, directed towards ingroup members, also predict “bridging” prosocial behaviours, directed towards outgroup members (Politi et al., 2021). Hence, we expected that individual differences in dispositional prosociality would also predict intentions to help Ukrainians.

Superordinate Identities and Helping

Besides individual differences in prosocial dispositions, people are generally more inclined to help those who are perceived as psychologically close, such as relatives, neighbours, and fellow nationals, compared to those who are psychologically distant, such as acquaintances, strangers, and foreigners (Baron & Szymanska, 2011; Stürmer & Siem, 2017). In line with the basic tenets of self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), situational cues about who is (re)categorized as an ingroup or an outgroup member impact helping behaviour (Dovidio et al., 1997; Levine et al., 2005; Subašić et al., 2008). Such recategorization processes whereby outgroup members are included in a superordinate identity increase

helping intentions (Cialdini et al., 1997; Stürmer & Siem, 2017; see also Levine and Manning 2013 for a literature review), including aid towards immigrants following a natural disaster (Andrighetto et al., 2016), willingness among consumers to pay extra for fair-trade products to support sweatshop workers (Subašić et al., 2011), or mobilizations in Bulgaria against the deportation of Jews in World War II (Reicher et al., 2006).

As the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has made salient the geopolitical borders and psychological boundaries of Europe, European identity as a superordinate entity emerges as a pertinent level of self-categorization to explain helping intentions towards Ukrainians. The evidence on the role of European identification in intergroup relations is however mixed and seems to depend on the level of boundary making associated with the European identity content (Hasbún et al. 2019; Kende et al., 2019; Konings et al., 2021; Schlenker, 2013; Visintin et al., 2018). Yet, little is known about its role in predicting intergroup helping. Only one study shows that helping intentions towards disaster victims among British participants were higher when European identity was made salient, and when the site of the disaster fell within the geographical boundaries of the relevant superordinate identity (i.e., Europe instead of South America, Levine & Thompson, 2004). Because of the similarities between Ukrainian and European people stressed in the current public debate, we expected that European identification would predict intentions to help Ukrainians.

Processes Underlying Intergroup Helping

Empathy with Ukrainians

Empathic responses towards Ukrainians might be a relevant process intervening in the effect of dispositional prosociality and European identification on helping intentions. As a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon (Batson, 2009; Decety & Cowell, 2014; Powell & Roberts, 2017), situational empathy might involve several components, including sympathy, concern, or compassion (Goetz et al., 2010), perspective-taking (Eisenberg et al., 1994), or

emotion contagion (Hatfield et al., 1994). Research has also suggested that empathic responses are linked with intergroup prosociality, including collective action against inequality (e.g., Saab et al., 2014), and humanitarian aid offered to refugees (Thraivalou et al., 2020).

In addition, people who are generally prosocial are also more likely to feel empathy for specific people in need (Carlo et al., 1991; Davis et al., 2003). Accordingly, Graziano et al. (2007, Study 3) found that empathic concerns experienced immediately after hearing about the victim's situation mediated the relation between agreeableness (i.e., a prosocial personality trait) and subsequent intentions to volunteer. In parallel, recategorization processes whereby outgroup members are included in a superordinate identity are also likely to inflate the empathic concerns directed towards others' suffering (Cikara et al., 2011; 2014; Tarrant et al., 2009; see also Venman, 2016 for a review). Exemplary are experiments where Caucasian and Chinese participants showed empathic neural responses watching an ingroup member's being pricked by a needle, while these responses were absent in case of an outgroup member (Xu et al., 2009; Zhou et al., 2020). Based on earlier evidence, we thus expected that empathy towards Ukrainians would mediate the relationship between both prosocial disposition and European identification and helping intentions.

Identity Fusion with Ukrainians

Another eligible process underlying the link between dispositional prosociality and European identification and helping intentions is the identity fusion with Ukrainians. Identity fusion has been measured as perceptual "closeness" with an individual or a group that motivates personally costly altruistic behaviours (Aron et al., 1992; Gómez et al., 2011; Swann & Buhrmester, 2015; Vezzali et al., 2016). Accordingly, in a series of controlled experiments, identity fusion was related to charitable donations (Swann et al., 2010). Furthermore, research revealed that identity fusion was an independent and stronger predictor

of helping intentions than empathy (Cialdini et al., 1997), and thus should be also associated with willingness to help.

Further, people who are generally prosocial are also more likely to feel connected with outgroup members. Indeed, people who are generally more prosocial tend to have more accessible relational-interdependent self-construal, thus including the other more readily in their self (Agnew et al., 2004; Cross et al., 2002; Tu et al., 2021). Similarly, people high in agreeableness are more likely to feel close to people in need, regardless of whether these are ingroup or outgroup members (Graziano et al., 2007). Identity fusion is also closely related to recategorization processes, whereby perceived closeness with outgroup members (e.g., Ukrainians) increases as identification to a common superordinate category (e.g., Europeans) increases (Schubert & Otten, 2002; see also Dovidio et al., 1997). Accordingly, Stone and Crisp (2007) demonstrated that British participants reported less psychological distance and more perceptual closeness towards outgroup members (i.e., French), when European identity was salient. Accordingly, identity fusion with Ukrainians should mediate the relationship between both prosocial disposition and European identification and helping intentions.

Overview of Two Studies

To test the main and indirect processes of dispositional prosociality and European identification on intentions to help Ukrainians, we designed two correlational studies in French-speaking Belgium. In Study 1, we tested the relationship of dispositional prosociality and European identification with intentions to help Ukrainians among a student sample. In Study 2, we replicated these associations in a well-powered study using a nationwide quota sample, and we estimated indirect effects via empathy and identity fusion with Ukrainians. The overarching conceptual model is presented in Figure 1. Operational hypotheses will be formulated for Study 1 and Study 2 separately.

[FIGURE 1 AROUND HERE]

Study 1

Study 1 was conducted in April 2022 on a student sample, six weeks after Russia invaded Ukraine. The questionnaire was originally designed for an unrelated research project, yet questions related to this study were added before ethical clearance was granted and data collection started. We expected that participants who scored higher in dispositional prosociality (H1), and who scored higher in European identification (H2) should report stronger intentions to help Ukrainians. Furthermore, we explored potential interaction effects between dispositional prosociality and European identification to qualify our main hypotheses.

Method

Participants

Three-hundred seventy-four bachelor psychology students enrolled in a French-speaking Belgian university participated in exchange of course credits (84.5% female, $M_{age} = 20.30$, $SD = 3.52$, ranging from 18 to 42, with 90% of the sample 23 years old or younger).¹ Of the total, 38 participants (10.2%) were active members of movements or aid groups supporting refugees and migrants, or they had been in the past. Two-hundred-forty-nine participants were Belgian citizens (66.6%), yet 47 (12.6%) reported that they themselves, or family members, had experienced an asylum procedure. Because no participant was Ukrainian, we maintained the full sample in the analyses. These socio-demographic variables were used as statistical controls.

Measures

Dispositional Prosociality. We used the French validation of the adults' prosocialness scale (Caprara et al., 2005; Carrizales et al., 2019). One of the original sixteen

¹ A sensitivity power analysis conducted using G*Power 3.1.9.4 suggested that with this sample size ($N = 374$), a minimum effect size of $R^2 = .02$ could be detected (.80 power, $\alpha = .05$).

items was not included in the questionnaire (“I am available for volunteer activities to help those who are in need”) due to a conceptual overlap with helping intentions. Participants indicated on a five-point Likert scale whether each of the fifteen statements was *Never true* (1), *Occasionally true* (2), *Sometimes true* (3), *Often true* (4), and *Almost always true* (5), for instance: “I try to be close to and take care of those who are in need”. Principal Component Analysis showed that a one-factor solution fit the data well, all factor loadings being higher than .50 ($\alpha = .89$).

European Identification. We adapted the scale proposed by McFarland et al. (2012), to measure to what extent participants identified with social groups at different levels of abstraction, ranging from one’s own local community, Belgians, Europeans, and humanity all over the world. Participants indicated to what extent they identified with each of the four groups on a five-point Likert scale with options *Not at all* (1), *Not really* (2), *Moderately* (3), *Fairly* (4), and *Strongly* (5). Although our hypotheses concerned European identification only, we included the other levels of self-categorization in the questionnaire to assess whether the effects of European identification hold above and beyond the effects of other levels of self-categorization.

Intentions to Help Ukrainians. We retrieved helping intentions measures from Roblain et al. (2020), who assessed intention to engage in helping asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. Participants indicated to what extent they were motivated to undertake a number of actions to help Ukrainians in Belgium (e.g., “provide temporary accommodation for one or more Ukrainians arriving in Belgium”) on a five-point Likert scale including options *Not at all motivated* (1), *Not really motivated* (2), *Moderately motivated* (3), *Fairly motivated* (4), and *Strongly motivated* (5). Principal Component Analysis revealed that a one-factor solution fit the data well, all factor loadings being higher than .61 ($\alpha = .88$).

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for all measures in this study.

[TABLE 1 HERE]

To test our hypotheses, dispositional prosociality and European identification were included as predictors in a multiple regression model using SPSS (version 28). Overall the model provided a good fit to the data, $F(2, 371) = 25.68, p < .001$, with a total variance explained of $R^2 = .12$. Both dispositional prosociality, $b = 0.40 (0.07), p < .001$, 95% CI [0.26, 0.55], and European identification were positively related to helping intentions, $b = 0.14 (0.05), p < .021$, 95% CI [0.05, 0.24], confirming H1 and H2, respectively.²

In a second step, we centred predictors and included their interaction term in a moderation analysis using the PROCESS macro (version 3.5, Model 1). The analyses revealed that the interaction between dispositional prosociality and European identification was significant, $b = 0.21 (0.07), p = .002$, 95% CI [0.08, 0.34], and increased the total variance explained, $\Delta R^2 = .02, F(1, 370) = 9.55, p = .002$. The positive effect of dispositional prosociality on helping intentions increased as participants scored higher in European identification. Figure 2 shows visual probing of the interaction term at $\pm 1 SD$ from the mean distribution of dispositional prosociality and European identification (see Hayes, 2018 for analytical details). Simple effects of dispositional prosociality on helping intentions were weaker but significant for lower European identifiers, $b = 0.20 (0.09), p = .035$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.39], and stronger for higher European identifiers, $b = 0.62 (0.10), p < .001$, 95% CI [0.43, 0.82]. Furthermore, simple effects of European identification on helping intentions were non-significant for people who reported low levels of dispositional prosociality $b = 0.02$

² Results were robust when participants' gender, age, origin, experiences with the asylum procedure, volunteering, and other levels of self-categorization were controlled for. Importantly, among all levels of self-categorization, only European identification was significantly associated with intentions to help Ukrainians.

(0.06), $p = .69$, 95% CI [- 0.09, 0.12], and stronger and significant among those who reported higher levels of dispositional prosociality, $b = 0.27$ (0.06), $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.16, 0.39].

In other words, European identification inflated the positive effects of dispositional prosociality but was unrelated to helping intentions among participants who reported lower dispositions to help others. This significant interaction is in line with Stürmer et al. (2005), who demonstrated that perceived similarities in terms of group membership increases the effects of prosocial dispositions on volunteering (see also Burnstein et al., 1994; Park & Schaller, 2005). Yet, our results deviate from evidence showing that agreeableness traits override different propensities to volunteer based on group membership (Graziano et al., 2007). Besides these few empirical exceptions, literature has hardly analysed whether prosocial dispositions and superordinate identities interact in predicting helping intentions. Given the ambivalence of previous findings, more research is needed to test the robustness of this interactive effect.

[FIGURE 2 HERE]

Study 2

In June 2022, we conducted a second well-powered correlational study, to replicate and generalize results of Study 1 to a nationwide sample, while also testing the underlying processes. To maximize the chances to replicate the unexpected interaction between dispositional prosociality and European identification, an a priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1.9.4, indicating that a sample size of 387 participants was needed to detect an effect size of $R^2 = .02$ (effect size of the interaction term from Study 1; .80 power, $\alpha = .05$). In line with Study 1, we expected again a positive relationship of dispositional prosociality (H1) and European identification (H2) with helping intentions. We also expected an indirect effect of dispositional prosociality via empathy with Ukrainians (H3) and via identity fusion with Ukrainians (H4). Finally, we also hypothesized an indirect

effect of European identification via empathy with Ukrainians (H5) and via identity fusion with Ukrainians (H6).

Once again, we estimated an interaction effect between dispositional prosociality and European identification to predict helping intentions. In the event of a significant interaction, we intended to proceed to test a mediated moderation and estimate conditional indirect effects (in line with Muller et al., 2005).

Method

Participants

Four hundred Belgian citizens were recruited from a national representative panel managed by Kantar (www.kantar.com) and matched the Belgian population in gender and age distribution. We excluded five participants below 18 and additional 24 due to a failed attention check. The final sample was composed of 371 participants (47.7% female, $M_{age} = 43.72$, $SD = 15.13$, ranging from 18 to 85 years old). Among the total, 27 participants (7.3%) were members of movements or aid groups supporting refugees and migrants, either presently or in the past. Ten participants (2.7%) reported personal or family experiences with the asylum procedure. No participant was Ukrainian. These socio-demographic variables were controlled for in the analyses.

Measures

Dispositional prosociality (15 items; $\alpha = .93$), **European identification** (single item), and **Intentions to help Ukrainians** (8 items; $\alpha = .92$) were assessed as in Study 1 (as well as identification at other levels of self-categorization).

Empathy with Ukrainians was assessed using a 9-item Measure of State Empathy scale ($\alpha = .88$, Powell & Roberts, 2017). Participants responded on a 7-point Likert scale (0 = *not at all*, 6 = *entirely*) to what extent they experienced cognitive (e.g., “I understand what Ukrainians are feeling”), affective (e.g., “I have feelings of empathy towards

Ukrainians”), and compassionate empathy towards Ukrainians (e.g., “I feel the same way as Ukrainians”).

Identity fusion with Ukrainians was measured with a single classic, pictorial item commonly named “inclusion-of-the-other-in-the-self-scale” (Aron et al., 1992; Gómez et al., 2011) assessing, on a 7-point scale, the extent to which participants viewed a *complete separation* (1) versus *complete overlap between themselves and Ukrainians* (7).

Results and Discussion

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for all measures used in this study.

[TABLE 2 HERE]

As in Study 1, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the main effects of dispositional prosociality and European identification on intentions to help Ukrainians, $F(2, 367) = 60.94, p < .001, R^2 = .25$. Replicating results of Study 1, dispositional prosociality (H1), $b = 0.40 (0.06), p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.29, 0.52]$, and European identification (H2), $b = 0.25 (0.04), p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.16, 0.33]$, were both positively related to helping intentions.³ However, the inclusion of the interaction term did not result in an increase of the overall variance explained, $F(3, 366) = 41.04, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .00$. Therefore, the interaction from Study 1 did not replicate with the present sample, $b = 0.05 (0.05), p = .279, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.04, 0.15]$. The inconsistent and weak effect size of the interaction term suggests that these two pathways are not multiplicative but rather cumulative. This interaction was therefore omitted from subsequent analyses.

³Results of this multiple regression analysis were robust when participants’ gender, age, origin, experiences with the asylum procedure, volunteering, and local, national, and humanity levels of self-categorization were controlled for. Importantly, and in line with Study 1, European identification was the strongest predictor among all levels of self-categorization. Differently from Study 1, a residual positive effect of identification with the local community and humanity on helping intentions was also found.

Next, a path analysis was conducted with Mplus version 8.2 (Múthen and Múthen, 2018) to assess the indirect effects of dispositional prosociality and European identification on intentions to help Ukrainians, via empathy and identity fusion with Ukrainians, respectively (see Figure 1).⁴ We used full information maximum likelihood estimates with robust standard errors, and indirect effects were computed with 5000 bootstraps and using 95% confidence intervals. Unstandardized effects and standard errors for each path are reported in Table 3.

We found a significant indirect effect of dispositional prosociality on intentions to help Ukrainians via empathy (H3), 95% *CI* [0.11, 0.24], but not via identity fusion with Ukrainians (H4), 95% *CI* [-0.00, 0.05]. That is, participants who scored higher on dispositional prosociality reported more empathy with Ukrainians (but not more identity fusion), and empathy was an intermediary variable in the relationship between dispositional prosociality and helping intentions. Furthermore, there was a significant indirect effect of European identification on intentions to help Ukrainians via empathy (H5), 95% *CI* [0.04, 0.13], and identity fusion with Ukrainians (H6), 95% *CI* [0.01, 0.04]. Namely, participants who scored higher in European identification reported more empathy and identity fusion with Ukrainians, which both functioned as intermediary variables in the relationship between European identification on helping intentions. This path analysis suggests that empathy with Ukrainians serves as an intermediary variable for *both* dispositional prosociality and European identification, whereas identity fusion with Ukrainians serves as an explanatory mechanism only for European identification.⁵

[TABLE 3 HERE]

⁴ Path analysis was preferred because, differently from the PROCESS macro, it allows for the inclusion of more than one predictor variable and the covariation between parallel mediators.

⁵ Indirect effects were robust when all controls variables were included in the model (including other levels of self-categorization). Only the indirect effect of European identification on identity fusion became non-significant when identification with humanity was included in the model

General Discussion

The rapid escalation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was accompanied by rising solidarity across European countries, many people showing willingness to help Ukrainian refugees fleeing their country and asking for international protection. Although solidarity movements had emerged during previous humanitarian crises too (e.g., Kende et al., 2017; Politi et al., 2017; Roblain et al., 2020), the vast mobilization of the European society in favour of Ukrainian refugees was somewhat unprecedented. Explaining the propensity of the European population to help Ukrainians, we identified two pathways, and contributed to bringing together two lines of research, on intergroup helping. Innovatively, we distinguished two underlying processes that link individual prosocial dispositions and European identification with intentions to help Ukrainians, namely empathy and identity fusion with Ukrainians. In doing so, we identified the psychological factors and processes that sustain European civil society to engage in humanitarian actions in favour of Ukrainian refugees.

Individual Prosocial Dispositions and Helping

Corroborating previous research on individual differences in intergroup helping (e.g., Habashi et al., 2016; Hortensius & de Gelder, 2018; Omoto et al., 2010; Politi et al., 2021; Zagefka & James, 2015), individual prosocial dispositions were related to intentions to help Ukrainians. Interestingly, dispositional prosociality was related to helping intentions via empathy with Ukrainians, corroborating earlier research on the role of empathy in promoting intergroup solidarity (e.g., Saab et al., 2014; Thravalou et al., 2020). In contrast, identity fusion was unrelated with individual differences in prosociality. Most likely, this empathic response among highly prosocial people extend to other outgroup members, thus representing the part of civil society most sensitive to humanitarian causes and solidarity actions, even though they do not perceive a clear overlap in the group boundaries or common fate. In other

words, this first pathway tackles social psychological processes that may be common to any mobilization intention directed towards others in need.

Superordinate Identities and Helping

Our data also indicated that European identification was related to intentions to help Ukrainians, consistently with prior evidence on the role of inclusive identities in motivating intergroup helping (e.g., Andrighetto et al., 2016; Levine & Thompson, 2004; Reicher et al., 2006; Subašić et al., 2011). Interestingly, European identification was related to helping intentions via both empathy and identity fusion with Ukrainians, corroborating both data showing that a superordinate, European identity serves to recategorize outgroup members (Stone & Crisp, 2007) and that it can motivate empathic reactions (e.g., Cikara et al., 2011; 2014). Although previous research has demonstrated the ambivalence of European identification in intergroup relations, the current humanitarian crisis seems to activate inclusive representations of European identity. Moreover, European identification predicted intentions to help Ukrainians above and beyond other levels of self-categorization. Most likely, this propensity among high European identifiers do not necessarily extend to other outgroup members perceived as more distant, either geographically or psychologically, from the European borders. In other words, this second pathway tackles social psychological processes that may be specific to mobilization intentions directed towards Ukrainians.

Limitations and Future Directions

In two correlational studies, we tackled the social psychological mechanisms underlying intentions to help Ukrainians. Because both studies were correlational and all focal variables were endogenous, however, causality cannot be claimed. In support of our model, the independent variables in both studies (i.e., dispositional prosociality and European identification) did not explicitly refer to Ukrainians but to more general dispositions and self-categorization dynamics. Furthermore, the dependent variable referred to specific behavioural

intentions (i.e., helping Ukrainians), clearly distinguishable from the two involved psychological processes: empathy and identity fusion with Ukrainians. Nevertheless, experimental designs are needed to properly test causality of the two pathways identified in this research.

Further limiting our conclusions, both studies uniquely focused on intentions to help Ukrainians as a target group. To address commonalities and specificities in the social psychological processes related to intergroup helping, future studies should manipulate different target groups. Indeed, one of the most sensitive and timely topics currently debated is the double standard applied to Ukrainian refugees as compared to other non-Western culturally stigmatized ethnic groups (Dahinden, 2022). In all likelihood, at the time of writing, a substantial body of research is focusing on the causes and implications of this double standard, trying to identify strategies to reduce it. This same type of comparison between social groups should be applied for studying individual prosocial dispositions and superordinate identities related to intergroup helping.

Despite these limitations, this is one of the first scholarly attempts to apply general social psychological processes to the study of the current humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Advancing our understanding of factors and processes related to intergroup helping, our results serve as a blueprint for future investigations and policy recommendations on how to promote and sustain citizen involvement in current humanitarian initiatives in favour of Ukrainians, spilling over into pro-refugee mobilizations more broadly.

Table 1*Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between main variables (Study 1)*

	<i>M (SD)</i>	2.	3.
1. Dispositional Prosociality	3.94 (0.60)	.15**	.31***
2. European Identification	3.37 (1.02)		.21***
3. Intentions to help Ukrainians	3.18 (0.85)		

Note: *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$

Table 2*Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations between Main Variables (Study 2)*

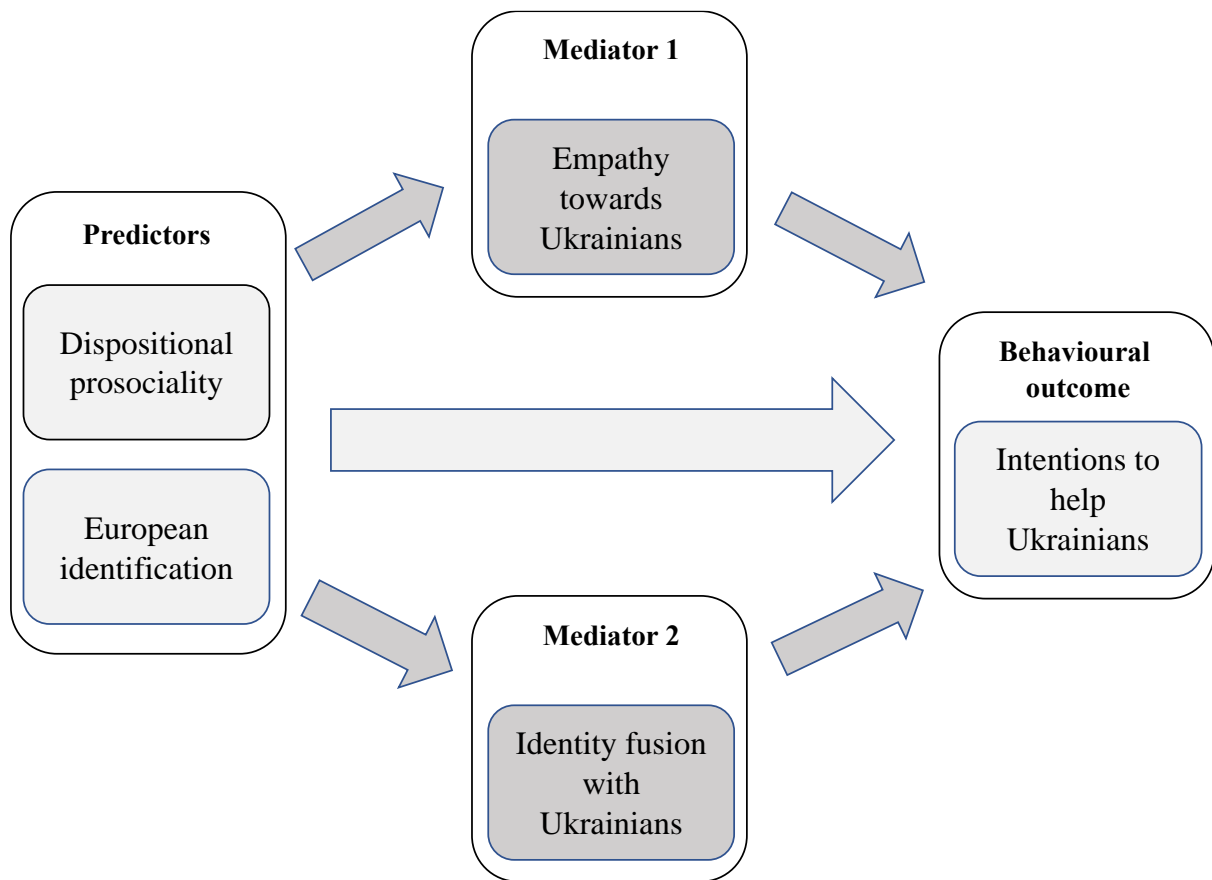
	<i>M (SD)</i>	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Dispositional Prosociality	3.30 (0.74)	.35***	.42***	.20***	.43***
2. European Identification	3.13 (1.02)		.36***	.24***	.40***
3. Empathy with Ukrainians	2.95 (0.75)			.52***	.61***
4. Identity fusion with Ukrainians	2.37 (1.41)				.42***
5. Intentions to Help Ukrainians	2.24 (0.90)				

Note. *** $p < .001$

Table 3*Unstandardized Effects and Standard Errors for each Path in Path Analysis (Study 2)*

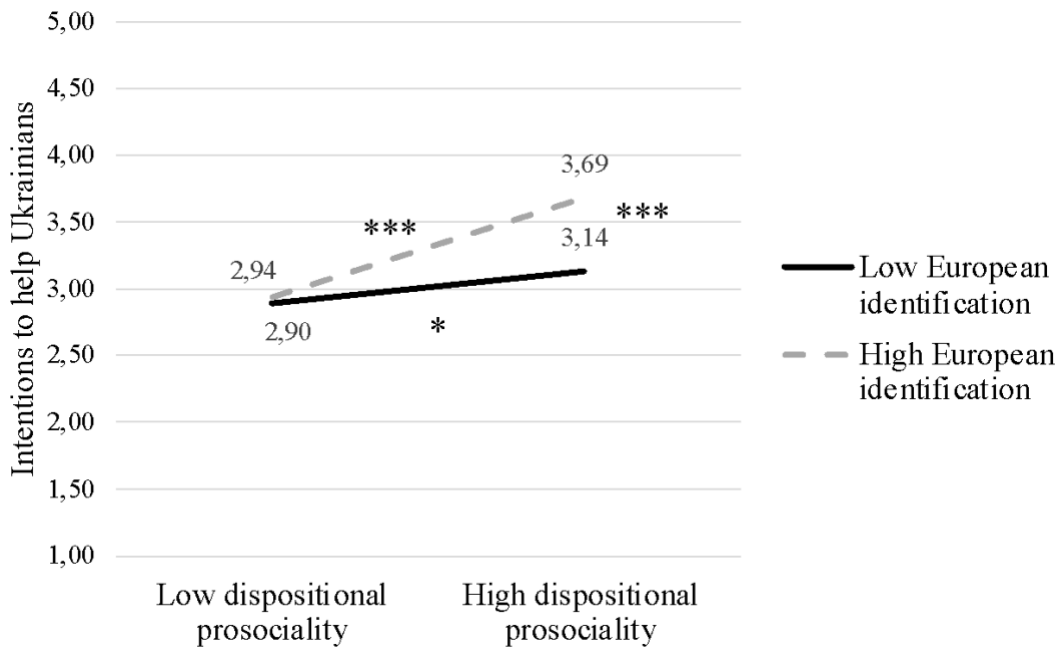
	Empathy with Ukrainians		Identity Fusion with Ukrainians		Intentions to Help Ukrainians	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Dispositional Prosociality	0.35***	(0.05)	0.26*	(0.11)	0.21***	(0.06)
European Identification	0.18***	(0.04)	0.28***	(0.07)	0.14***	(0.04)
Empathy with Ukrainians					0.49***	(0.07)
Identity Fusion with Ukrainians					0.09**	(0.03)

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. Predictor variables are depicted in the rows, outcomes variables are depicted in the columns. The covariance between Empathy with Ukrainians and Identity Fusion with Ukrainians was significant ($b = .41$, $SE = .05$, 95% CI [.32, .51]).

Figure 1: Conceptual model

Note: Variables and main effects measured in both studies are reported in lighter shades of grey, while variables and indirect effects measured only in Study 2 are reported in darker shades of greys. Arrows represent expected positive relations between variables.

Figure 2: Probing of the interaction effect on helping intentions at relatively low and high levels of dispositional prosociality and European identification.



Note: Simple effects are reported at ± 1 SD from the mean distribution from the estimated mean. *** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

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