



Feminist identification, inclusive victimhood and supporting outgroups

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ABSTRACT

Our research demonstrates the key role of identity content—feminist, egalitarian, or nonfeminist—in predicting solidarity-based actions towards outgroup members among women with regards to the cognitive construals of victimization—victim consciousness. Perceived similarities with other victim groups—inclusive victim consciousness—may have positive effects on intergroup relations. Using an online large sample of women from Hungary ($N = 772$; $SD = 11.54$), we show that feminist identification is associated with higher levels of support for victimized outgroups. However, contrary to our expectations that inclusive victimhood would play a significant role, we identified an association between support for other groups and collective victim beliefs only with respect to the centrality of ingroup victimization. These results contribute to the emerging literature on collective victim beliefs and solidarity towards other victimized groups, suggesting that perceived relevance of victimization for own identity may be a more important link in terms of solidarity between victimized groups than emphasizing shared victimization over different identities that outgroups are formed over.

1. Introduction

In research on intergroup relations the focus has recently shifted from attitudes between advantaged group members and disadvantaged group members, to the attitudes held by various disadvantaged groups towards one another. Studies on this specific topic identify either strong cohesive mutual support or competition, and, as a result, conflict between minority groups (Barlow et al., 2012). The aim of the present study was to analyze the probability of prosocial behaviors between different disadvantaged groups. Drawing on theories of social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and collective victim consciousness (Vollhardt, 2015) we explored the attitudes of women towards other minority groups—sexual, religious, or ethnic minorities, individuals experiencing homelessness, immigrants, etc.—in Hungary, based on their feminist identification type (i.e., feminist, egalitarian, nonfeminist).

To the best of our knowledge our study is among the very first ones that examine the role of victim consciousness among feminists (compared to egalitarians and nonfeminists) on solidarity towards other disadvantaged groups. Feminists, across different cultures, are the ones who are most likely to be sensitive to gender discrimination and act against it (as shown in the U.S.: Zucker, 2004; see also Cichocka et al.,

2013, in Poland). Still, women who explicitly identify as feminist are one commonly stigmatized minority group (Cichocka et al., 2013; Radke et al., 2016; Roy et al., 2007). Because they are themselves a stigmatized group while being advocates for gender equality and the actors of social change, it is important to know what modifies tendency to support other disadvantaged groups among women based on their endorsement of feminist identity in contexts where research on feminist movement is still scarce. Hence, we test our research questions in Hungary, among a diverse female sample. We will discuss the role of collective victimhood and social identity—feminist identity—on solidarity and outline our empirical predictions. We then will discuss the specific cultural context in which the study was conducted. In our research feminists are women who explicitly self-identify as a member of a group of feminists and hold all ‘feminist cardinal beliefs’ (Zucker, 2004), egalitarians or ‘non-labelers’ are women who hold all feminist cardinal beliefs but do not self-identify as feminist and nonfeminists are women who do not hold all feminist cardinal beliefs and do not identify as feminist.

1.1. Feminism in Hungary

In the EU, compared to other member states, the gender gap tends to

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be higher in post-communist countries (Hausmann et al., 2012). Juhász (2015) stated that the distance between Hungarian officials and the idea of gender equality has been getting wider. Although women's representation in the work context increased after the system changed, gender inequality was sustained by employing women mostly in low-status jobs and increasing women's burden (Marsh, 2009; Mathews et al., 2005; Olson et al., 2007). Moreover, as witnessed in most post-socialist countries, Hungarian gender regime has also been influencing the attitudes as well as expectations towards women's performance in professional area because of the strong effect of 'familialism' (Nagy et al., 2016). Additionally Lannert and Nagy (2020) reported that segregation patterns have prevailed within the higher education system even though female representation of higher education has been growing. Also, EIGE Gender Equality Index (EIGE, 2017) and United Nation's DESA (UN, 2015) indicated that, advancements to decrease gender inequality in many areas such as employment, education, health and un-paid care, have stagnated in the last two decades.

Nevertheless, feminism has not become a strong movement after the system change in Hungary and there is an ongoing discourse about the necessity of 'catching up with the developed West,' even claiming that the Hungarian women's movement is lagging 40 years behind (Kováts, 2018). Moreover, changes regarding gender inequality have tended to profit professional women more than those working in unskilled positions (IPPR, 2013). These tendencies have added to a feeling of frustration and disappointment with equality politics in general, leading many women to doubt the equality paradigm itself and seek alternative empowerment in anti-modernist projects resting on nationalism and familialism (Gelnarová & Pető, 2016; Pető, 2010).

In 2014, Hungarian prime minister declared that the era of transnational hegemony of liberal democracy is over, and Hungary is building an "illiberal democracy" (Simon, 2014). Illiberal governance bases on majoritarian nationalism (Anand, 2014) that conceptualizes the state as an apparatus of majority rule. Illiberal parties let their supporters to impose their views on the rest of the society under the term 'national will'. In this sense, minority rights are rejected as threatening the majority's rights (Ost, 2016). In Hungary, feminism and human rights sector have been framed as projects and agents working for foreign interests which are potentially dangerous for the "national interests". Most of the NGOs, including the ones working for women rights, were denounced for trying to illegitimately influence political life by Hungarian Government, because they received grants from either EEA, Norway or George Soros (; Grzebalska & Andrea, 2018; Simon, 2014).

According Kováts (2017) Hungary is one of the few countries in Europe where 'gender' is politicized by the government itself as 'gender ideology,' with the accusations of threatening 'traditional families,' children's identity, and, overall, the future of Europe. The government referenced 'gender ideology' in its refusal to ratify the Istanbul Convention and in its 2018 decision to remove accreditation from gender studies MA programs in Hungarian universities. In the end "... stripped of funding, demonized as threats, as well as operating in an illiberal context where their voice is not heard, women's NGOs, academics and feminist civil servants are pushed into a position where they have little outreach, cannot influence policy making through previously utilized, technocratic channels like advocacy or consultancy, and are often unable to function without relying on foreign donors" (Grzebalska & Andrea, 2018, p.170). These authors also stated that feminist organizations and the ones they provide help -like domestic violence victims-being harmed by the restructuring of the civil society sector (i.e. fostering only those NGOs that get governmental support) and the securitization of human rights activism (see also Fodor, 2022). Additionally in their book on anti-gender politics in the populist movement, Graff and Korolczuk (2021) mentioned that "In many countries, including Poland, Italy and Hungary, right-wing populists resort to the claim that 'genderism' makes nation states vulnerable to the 'barbarian invasion,' as refugees are portrayed by the radical right" (p.72).

Although the feminist network is quite young in Hungary, the history

of the Hungarian feminist movement goes back to the beginning of the century. In 1904, the Feminist Association was found by Hungarian women, one of whose leading members was World Peace Award winner Rózsa Bédy-Schwimmer. Several feminist organizations exist in contemporary Hungary, including Hungarian Women's Lobby and Magyar Nők Szövetsége both aiming to support female solidarity and to counteract gender discrimination. One of these grassroots organizations, The Women's Rights Association (Nők a Nőkért Együtt az Erőszak Ellen Egyesület or NANE), in Budapest provides services for women victims of domestic violence in Hungary. Mathews et al. (2005), as a result of their quantitative study with 11 NANE members as participants, stated that despite its unique history, Hungarian feminists' identity development bears some similarities to the Feminist Identity Formation proposed by Downing and Roush (1985) based on Cross' (1971) Black Identity Development Model.

Following the theory Mathews et al. (2005) interpreted 5 stages of feminist identity formation in Hungarian context as: (1) initial denial of oppression and feminist consciousness raising; (2) gradual internalization of cognitive and emotional awareness; (3) interpersonal solidarity and benefits of belonging to NANE and the international women's movement; (4) gaining "voice" that impacts personal relationships; and (5) enacting feminist-activist beliefs to help others through NANE involvement. However, there were three main differences: (1) early group solidarity appeared to be crucial; (2) NANE volunteers do not appear to differentiate between activism and feminism; (3) developing feminist identity in a society that is overwhelmingly hostile not only to feminism, but also volunteerism and social change. Because of these similarities and differences, we believe our examination of the effects of social identity and victim consciousness on solidarity can be informative not only for the movement in Hungary but also for feminists in other countries including the understudied post-communist region (notable exceptions of studies published in Sex Roles include Henderson-King & Zhermer, 2003, on Russia; Mathews et al., 2005, on Hungary; and Cichocka et al., 2013, on Poland).

1.2. Feminist identity

Feminist Identity is typically defined as self-identification as a member of a group of feminists (Ashmore et al., 2004; Eisele & Stake, 2008). Downing and Roush (1985) argued that women pass through similar phases of identity development with ethnic minority groups and they presented a 5 stages model of feminist identity development for women based on Cross' (1971) theory of Black Identity Development. The 5 progressive stages are summarized as follows: "(1) *passive acceptance*, when women deny or are unaware of any cultural discrimination against them and they live with traditional gender roles; (2) *revelation*, when women begin to notice contradictions around them experience anger and/or guilt; (3) *embeddedness-emanation*, when women identify strongly with their own gender while developing strong and intimate emotional connections to other women; (4) *synthesis*, when women celebrate and integrate the positive aspects of being female into their self-concepts and establish flexibility in their negotiation of gender roles and their interactions with the world; (5) *active commitment*, when women turn their new identities into effective action that is driven by a deep and pervasive commitment to social change" (Downing & Roush, 1985, as cited in Mathews et al., 2005, p. 90). The authors also added that due to their readiness and awareness as well as the social conditions a woman might show a linear progress or recycles through the stages.

Feminist self-identification is not only a predictor of feminist attitudes and beliefs in the goal of gender equality in the social system but has also been shown to be a predictor of collective action on behalf of women in US (Nelson et al., 2008; Zucker, 2004). In a study on activism on behalf of women's rights, the biggest difference was between feminists and nonlabelers (who hold feminist attitudes but do not identify as feminist), whereby feminists were more willing to engage in activism (Nelson et al., 2008). Similarly, Zucker (2004) claimed that nonlabelers

and nonfeminists showed approximately the same levels of activism—behavioral intentions or actual participation—and that this was significantly lower than feminists' interest in activism. In another study, college students who explicitly identified as feminists were more willing to support victims of sexual violence (Lewis et al., 2017). Furthermore, according to participants who did not identify as feminists, feminism is needed only by women who have experienced discrimination, whereas they claimed to have had no personal experience of discrimination (Zucker, 2004). As mainstream feminism becomes more intersectional (Anderson & Brassel, 2017; Mack-Canty & Wright, 2004; Tarrant et al., 2009), leading to an emphasis on strong interrelations between oppression based on gender and oppression based on sexuality, class, race/ethnicity, etc. (see Cole, 2009, as cited in Brassel & Anderson, 2020), it may motivate feminists to develop a more inclusive personal feminist identity as well (Fernandes, 2010). For example, in their study Uysal et al. (2022) searched heterosexual feminist women's willingness to participate in solidarity-based collective action for LGBTQ+ rights. They found that higher feminist identification predicts more willingness to participate in solidarity-based collective action, whereas higher heterosexual identification predicts less willingness.

In this context, we argue that women who explicitly identify as feminist may be more motivated, compared to egalitarians and non-identifiers, to support victimized outgroups. In their study Mikolajczak et al. (2022) researched the key role of identity content in predicting collective action in support of progressive and reactionary social change among women. Their results indicated that identification with 'women' is either weakly associated or unrelated to progressive or reactionary collective action. However, feminist identification is found to be associated with support for progressive collective action while identification with traditional women is associated with support for reactionary collective action. Based on the earlier research referred above, inclusive victim consciousness was expected to be positively related to and predict support for other victimized groups. However, since group identification is more salient and relatively high among feminists, we expected inclusive victim consciousness to have the strongest effect among feminists. We handled women identified explicitly as feminist as a member of victimized group since women who explicitly identify as feminist are one commonly stigmatized minority group (Cichocka et al., 2013; Radke et al., 2016; Roy et al., 2007). For example, the term feminism is often associated with connotations of "radicalism", and the feminist subject is often seen as an unattractive, humorless, "man-hating," militant lesbian zealot (Kelly, 2015). Anti-feminist backlash seems to be present even in countries without a tradition of gender equality efforts, such as post-communist Poland (Frąckowiak-Sochańska, 2011; Graff, 2003, 2007; Marsh, 2009). This is reflected in negative stereotypes about feminists that are similar in content to those prevalent in the U.S. (Frąckowiak-Sochańska, 2011; Heitlinger, 1996). Although a recent study showed a tendency against negativity towards feminism (Hoskin et al., 2017), generalizability of the findings needs to be in question; despite the diverse sample, participants were mainly from the United States (55.8 %) or Canada (35.2 %).

1.3. When do minority groups help each other? Collective victimhood

Collective victimhood refers to individuals' sense of group-based victimization by virtue of their identification with a victimized group, even without having been personally harmed (Bar-Tal et al., 2009). Collective victimhood studies among minority groups mostly target conflicts among minority groups around the world—for example, African Americans, Korean Americans, and Latinos (Bergesen & Herman, 1998); Burundians, Rwandans, and citizens of DRC (Vollhardt & Bilali, 2014). Such conflicts may be caused by limited resources, zero-sum beliefs, competition for employment, or language barriers. However, collective victim beliefs also create positive intergroup relations (see Vollhardt, 2009, 2015). A subjective sense of collective victimhood may foster solidarity among members of victimized groups whose ancestors

experienced victimization on different grounds (Shnabel et al., 2012). Hence, minority groups from various backgrounds may be important support groups for each other.

Vollhardt (2010) differentiated three aspects of group-based victimization (or group-based victim consciousness): inclusive victim consciousness, exclusive victim consciousness, and centrality of ingroup victim consciousness. *Inclusive victim consciousness* embraces perceived similarity with various victim groups. It has been assumed that inclusive victim consciousness may unite members of different groups, who are not necessarily conflicting parties, and may also promote reconciliation (Shnabel et al., 2012; Szabó et al., 2019; Vollhardt, 2009, 2015). Thus, commonly experienced victimization and perceived similarity of the experience of stigmatization and injustice, which are the main elements of inclusive victim consciousness, may be strong motivators for collective action or prosocial behaviors towards other minority groups. In this respect, based on empirical studies in various contexts—in Northern Ireland (Cohrs et al., 2015); in India (Vollhardt et al., 2016); between Israelis and Palestinians (Shnabel et al., 2017); and between Alevi living in Turkey and those living in different parts of Western Europe (Yildiz & Verkuyten, 2011)—inclusive victim consciousness is known to foster positive intergroup relations, collective activism, and solidarity.

In contrast to *inclusive victim consciousness*, which refers to the perception of similarities between the victimization of ingroups and outgroups, *exclusive victim consciousness* emphasizes the uniqueness and distinctness of the victimization or victim status of the ingroup. It is defined as a belief that the ingroup has suffered far more in comparison to outgroups (Vollhardt & Bilali, 2014). Based on the literature (e.g. Noor et al., 2012; Schori-Eyal et al., 2014), Vollhardt et al. (2016) argued that exclusive victim consciousness may be a factor in competition and conflicts between various minority groups. The last aspect of group-based victim consciousness, *centrality of victim consciousness*, concerns the importance that individuals ascribe to the suffering of their ingroup. Specifically, this factor is used to measure the degree to which people perceive the ingroup's victimization as personally important (Vollhardt, 2010).

1.4. The present research

Since the number of studies on collective victimhood in 'non-post-conflict' contexts is very small (as noted by Noor et al., 2012), the present study analyzed the effects of identification with a stigmatized group on attitudes towards other disadvantaged groups—immigrants, members of the Hungarian minority in neighboring countries ('cross-border Hungarians'), people living in extreme poverty, individuals experiencing homelessness, addicts, chronic patients, sexual minorities, Roma people, victims of abuse, religious minorities, people with disabilities, Jews, and other disadvantaged groups in Hungary. The overall aim of the study was to investigate the possible contribution of victim beliefs to prosocial behaviors among women towards various minority groups in the Hungarian context.

Based on the earlier literature referred to above, we hypothesized that inclusive victim consciousness would predict increased support for disadvantaged outgroups among feminists. We conducted an online survey among women in Hungary. To control for conceptually related correlates of inclusive victim consciousness, and to test their degree of overlap or distinctiveness, we also assessed exclusive victim consciousness and centrality of ingroup victimization (Vollhardt, 2010). The present study contributes to the literature on the differential effects of inclusive and exclusive victim consciousness on attitudes towards other minority groups (that are not parties to a conflict) in Hungary (see Curtin et al., 2016; Szabó et al., 2019; Szabó & Mészáros, 2018). What is more, previous research on feminist identification has been criticized by not being truly representative because they relied almost exclusively on under-graduate samples (Hoskin et al., 2017). In response, the current study draws from a large Hungarian sample not only limited to under-graduate students. We expected: (1) Feminists to be more helpful

towards other disadvantaged groups, compared to egalitarians (who hold the cardinal beliefs of feminism but do not identify as feminists) and nonfeminists; (2) Inclusive victim consciousness to be more related to support towards victimized outgroups, compared to exclusive victim consciousness and centrality of ingroup victimization; (3) Inclusive victim consciousness to be higher among feminists than among egalitarians and nonfeminists; (4) Centrality of ingroup victimization to have a stronger effect on supporting disadvantaged outgroups among feminists, compared to egalitarians and nonfeminists.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

We conducted an a priori power analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) based on the measures of the present study and our goal was to obtain 0.95 power to detect an effect size of 0.09 (f^2) at the standard 0.05 alpha error probability. Based on the analysis, we aimed to recruit at least 145 participants. All participants were Hungarian. Participants were recruited through online advertisements. In order to participate, individuals needed to be 18 years of age or older ($N = 812$). All recruitment materials directed participants to the study's website, which provided a brief description of the study. Of the 812 participants, excluding those who did not belong neither feminist, egalitarian or nonfeminist group, data was left from 772 participants for analysis. Most of the sample (75 %) were either studying at university or were university graduates. Furthermore, nearly half of the sample (45.6 %) reported identification with different disadvantaged groups: LGBTQ+, Jews, individuals experiencing homelessness, addicts, disabled people, Roma individuals. Moreover, 74.6 % of them reported that either a friend or a family member belongs to one of the above mentioned disadvantaged groups. The participants ranged from 18 to 77 years old ($M = 35.75$; $SD = 11.54$).

2.2. Procedure

The study was conducted among women in Hungary. Relevant permissions were provided by the ethical committee of researchers' university. The questionnaire items were translated into Hungarian using the translation and back-translation method and uploaded to the Qualtrics system. Participants were recruited via publication on the social media accounts of relevant groups including NGOs supporting women rights. Participation was totally anonymous. After filling out an informed consent form at the beginning of the online survey, participants completed a questionnaire on measures of victim consciousness, gender role preference, strength of gender identity, and feminist beliefs and behavior, as well as control variables.

2.3. Measures

Participants rated items measuring different constructs on a seven-point Likert scale, in each case ranging from 1 = 'Totally disagree' to 7 = 'Totally agree,' unless otherwise noted. Relevant permission was provided by the university ethics committee.

2.3.1. Feminist beliefs and identification questionnaire

We used the feminist beliefs and identity measure developed by Zucker (2004), which relies on three cardinal beliefs of feminism to assess participants' agreement with the equality of the sexes. The three items are: 'Girls and women have not been treated as well as boys and men in our society'; 'Women and men should be paid equally for the same work'; and 'Women's unpaid work should be more socially valued.' Agreement with each of the items was expressed in a yes/no format. In the present study, 647 women (79 %) endorsed all three beliefs; 148 women (18 %) endorsed two beliefs; 15 women (2 %) endorsed only one belief; and two women (1 %) rejected all three beliefs.

The feminist identity part of the measure consisted of an item based on acceptance of the label 'Do you identify as a feminist?'. This item was again expressed in a yes/no format. In our study, 353 women (43.5 %) stated that they were feminists and 459 women (56.5 %) that they were not. Finally, based on these two measures, participants were grouped into three categories following the work of Zucker (2004). Women who endorsed the three cardinal beliefs and accepted the label ($N = 353$) were considered as feminists. The egalitarian group consisted of women who endorsed all three cardinal beliefs but did not accept the label ($N = 294$). Finally, women who rejected at least one cardinal belief and the label were considered as nonfeminists ($N = 125$). Forty women did not fit into any group, since they endorsed fewer than three of the cardinal beliefs but accepted the label, thus they formed a fourth group. Since the number of identifiers in this group was low, we continued our analysis with the first three groups: feminists, egalitarians, and nonfeminists.

2.3.2. Victim Consciousness Scale

To assess perceived similarities with and distinctiveness from other, unspecified victim groups, we used Vollhardt's measures of inclusive and exclusive victim consciousness (Vollhardt, 2010). To measure the degree to which people perceive the victimization of the ingroup as personally important, we used Vollhardt's measure of the centrality of ingroup victimization (Vollhardt, 2010). The questionnaire items were reworded and adapted to gender: inclusive victim consciousness ('The victimization experienced by other groups in Hungary is similar to that experienced by women', 'The victimization of women happened according to general patterns that repeat throughout history and all over the world', 'Women has a lot in common with other groups that have experienced persecution'; $\alpha = 0.80$); and exclusive victim consciousness ('Women's past suffering is distinct from that of other groups', 'The suffering of women is unique in history', 'Women has always been persecuted'; $\alpha = 0.71$); personal centrality of ingroup victimization ('I try to learn as much as I can about what women has endured in the past', 'I am not very interested in what women has experienced in the past', 'Women's history is not an issue I am usually concerned with'; $\alpha = 0.77$). All subscales—inclusive, exclusive, and centrality—presented moderate to high levels of reliability (see Table 1).

2.3.3. Demographics and control variables

Demographic questions included age, gender, and level of education. We also asked whether participants themselves and any of their close friends or family members identify with one or more of the victimized groups mentioned in the study. We named these two variables as 'own membership' and 'family/friend membership'. They are handled as control variables since it is known that personal and family experiences of suffering due to identification with any disadvantaged group motivates people to act on behalf of other victimized groups. Family experiences make collective suffering more salient and personally relevant and therefore such "ego involvement" strengthens attitudes towards related issues and increases willingness to support victims. Prosocial behavior, then, occurs due to enhanced perspective-taking or identification with other victims and serves as a coping mechanism (for a review see Vollhardt, 2009). Therefore, any reported membership other than feminist identification might foster support towards other

Table 1

Sample items, Cronbach's Alphas, and descriptive statistics for the measures used in Study 1.

| Scale | Number of items | Reliability (Cronbach's α) | M | SD |
|--|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------|------|
| Inclusive VC | 4 | 0.80 | 19.6 | 3.71 |
| Exclusive VC | 4 | 0.71 | 13.34 | 4.23 |
| Personal Centrality of Ingroup Victimization | 3 | 0.77 | 13.98 | 4.11 |

Note: $N = 772$; VC = Victim Consciousness. Response scales ranged from 1 (disagree) to 7 (agree).

disadvantaged groups above and beyond the effect of feminist identification itself.

2.3.4. Outcome variable

A single-item measure of attitudes towards other victimized groups was used. Specifically, we assessed prosocial attitudes towards victimized outgroups using the following item: ‘Did you support any of the following minority/disadvantaged groups listed below (even on social media) last year? If so, please tick the box for the groups you did support and the type of support that applies to that group. Listed disadvantaged groups were: immigrants, cross-border Hungarians, people living in extreme poverty, individuals experiencing homelessness, addicts, chronic patients, sexual minorities, Roma people, victims of abuse, religious minorities, people with disabilities, Jews, or any other disadvantaged group in Hungary. Mentioned support types included ‘I posted something on my social media page to support one of these groups’, ‘I attended a protest with one of these groups’. Finally, the number of groups that a participant supported in any way was calculated and compared by giving +1 point for each group supported. There were 13 disadvantaged groups in total, thus the maximum sum possible was 13.

3. Results

After removing forty participants who do not belong neither of the feminist, egalitarian and non-feminist group we have a total sample of $N = 772$ ($SD = 11.54$) participants to include all analyses. $N = 353$ identified as feminist of which $N = 178$ stated they belong any of the disadvantaged groups mentioned in the study. Within the total sample, $N = 294$ were egalitarian, of which $N = 141$ also belong to any of the disadvantaged groups mentioned in the study. Rest of the sample $N = 125$ did not meet any criteria for feminist or egalitarian category and were labeled as non-feminists. Nearly half of this group $N = 50$ stated they belong to any of the disadvantaged groups mentioned in the study. We used SPSSv.26 for descriptive analyses, correlation analyses as well as regression analyses, on the other hand, we preferred PROCESSv.3.1.4 for testing our moderation model. Correlations between all variables are presented in Table 2.

Centrality of ingroup victimization differed depending on the group—feminists, egalitarians, and nonfeminists— $F(2, 769) = 147.03$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.28$, as did exclusive victim consciousness, $F(2, 769) = 9.53$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$. Centrality of ingroup victimization was higher for those in the feminist group ($M = 16.24$, $SD = 3.32$) or the egalitarian group ($M = 12.24$, $SD = 3.68$), $p < .001$, than for those in the nonfeminist group ($M = 11.12$, $SD = 3.83$), $p < .001$; egalitarians and nonfeminists also differed significantly, $p < .001$ (post-hoc LSD tests). Exclusive victim consciousness was higher for those coded as feminists ($M = 13.94$, $SD = 4.31$) than for those coded as egalitarians ($M = 13.05$, $SD = 4.09$), $p = .01$, and for those coded as nonfeminists ($M = 12.12$, $SD = 3.96$), $p < .001$; egalitarians and nonfeminists also differed significantly, $p = .03$. On the other hand, inclusive victimhood did not show a significant difference between the three groups: $F(2, 769) = 1.85$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$. However, feminists showed the highest levels of inclusive victim consciousness, whereas egalitarians showed the lowest levels (see Fig. 1).

Table 2
Correlations between variables used in the present study ($N = 772$).

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--------------------------|---|--------|---------|-------|
| 1. Centrality of IV | – | 0.25** | 0.07* | 0.25* |
| 2. Exclusive VC | | – | –0.35** | 0.09* |
| 3. Inclusive VC | | | – | 0.07* |
| 4. Support for Outgroups | | | | – |

Note. $N = 772$; VC = Victim Consciousness; IV = Ingroup Victimization.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

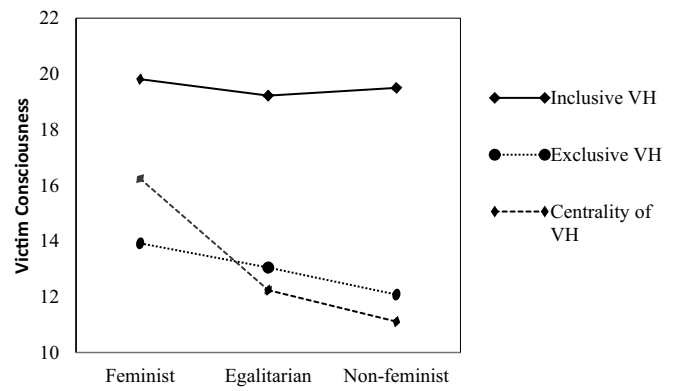


Fig. 1. Victimhood Consciousness Levels Based on Identified Group. Note. $N = 772$.

Furthermore, we compared the number of different disadvantaged groups that participants claimed to support. ANOVA showed that these numbers differed depending on the group: $F(2, 769) = 15.64$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.04$. Those who identified as feminists supported higher numbers of groups ($M = 6.84$, $SD = 3.30$) than those who identified as egalitarians ($M = 6.17$, $SD = 3.51$), $p = .013$, and nonfeminists ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 3.52$) $p < .001$; egalitarians and nonfeminists also differed significantly, $p < .001$ (see Fig. 2). We also compared feminists who identified with other minority groups and feminists who identified as feminists only in terms of support: they differed significantly from one another $F(1, 351) = 5.33$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$. Feminists who identified with other minority groups scored higher in terms of support ($M = 7.24$, $SD = 3.44$) than feminists who identified only as feminists ($M = 6.44$, $SD = 3.42$). Furthermore, we compared feminists who had a family member or friend who identified with a minority group and those who did not: these two groups also differed significantly from one another: $F(1, 351) = 5.42$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$. The former group scored higher in terms of support ($M = 7.01$, $SD = 3.29$) than the latter ($M = 5.87$, $SD = 3.21$).

Simple linear regression analysis was performed for each group—feminists, egalitarians, and nonfeminists. In order to be sure that support was evoked simply by victim consciousness, we controlled for the possible effects of membership in different minority groups and for having a friend / family member who identified with another minority group by first performing a controlled regression analysis. Overall results of the analysis indicated that when victim consciousness variables (i.e., inclusive victimhood, exclusive victimhood and centrality of victimhood) were included in the analysis, both own membership and

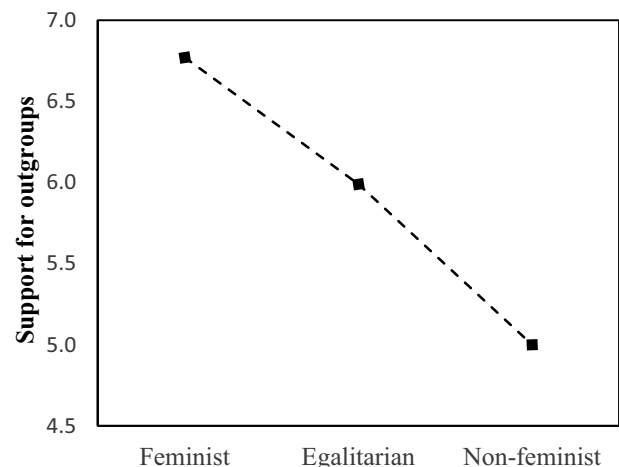


Fig. 2. Support levels for victimized outgroups based on identified group. Note $N = 772$.

the membership of a friend / family member in various minority groups still have a significant effect on support for outgroup members: $F(5, 766) = 18.38, p < .001, R^2 = 0.10$ (see Table 3).

However, central victim consciousness significantly predicted support among *feminists* above and beyond own membership in other minority groups: $F(5, 347) = 5.02, p < .05, R^2 = 0.054$. Central victim consciousness predicted support among *egalitarians* as well: $F(5, 288) = 4.59, p < .001, R^2 = 0.058$. We also performed regression analyses for each group—*feminist only*, *feminist identified with other minority groups*, *egalitarian only*, *egalitarian identified with other minority groups*, *nonfeminist only*, *nonfeminist identified with other minority groups*—and inclusive victim consciousness was found to be a significant predictor of support exclusively for the *feminist only* group: $F(4, 170) = 7.03, p < .001, R^2 = 0.12$ (see Table 4).

4. Discussion

Within the present research we studies on collective victimhood in ‘non-post-conflict’ context, specifically we analyzed the effects of identification with a stigmatized group (i.e., *feminists*) on attitudes towards other disadvantaged groups—immigrants, members of the Hungarian minority in neighboring countries (‘cross-border Hungarians’), people living in extreme poverty, individuals experiencing homelessness, addicts, chronic patients, sexual minorities, Roma people, victims of abuse, religious minorities, people with disabilities, Jews, and other disadvantaged groups in Hungary. The overall aim of the study was to investigate the possible contribution of victim beliefs to prosocial behaviors among women towards various minority groups in the Hungarian context. Based on the relevant literature presented in the introduction section, we hypothesized that inclusive victim consciousness would predict increased support for disadvantaged outgroups among *feminists*. To control for conceptually related correlates of inclusive victim consciousness, and to test their degree of overlap or distinctiveness, we also assessed exclusive victim consciousness and centrality of ingroup victimization (Vollhardt, 2010). We expected: (1) *Feminists* to be more helpful towards other disadvantaged groups, compared to *egalitarians* (who hold the cardinal beliefs of feminism but do not identify as *feminists*) and *nonfeminists*; (2) Inclusive victim consciousness to be more related to support towards victimized outgroups, compared to exclusive victim consciousness and centrality of ingroup victimization; (3) Inclusive victim consciousness to be higher among *feminists* than among *egalitarians* and *nonfeminists*; (4) Centrality of ingroup victimization to have a stronger effect on supporting disadvantaged outgroups among *feminists*, compared to *egalitarians* and *nonfeminists*.

We believe that our findings provided evidence of the relations between collective victimhood beliefs and support towards other minority groups among women in Hungary. These groups were not conflicting

Table 3

Hierarchical regression analysis of victim consciousness on support for total sample.

| Variables* | | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| Step 1: Control variables | Own Membership | 0.13** | 0.12** |
| | Family/Friend Membership | 0.15** | 0.12** |
| | R^2 | 0.05 | |
| | F | 21.27** | |
| Step 2: Main effects | Centrality of IV | | 0.20** |
| | Inclusive VC | | 0.08 |
| | Exclusive VC | | 0.07 |
| | R^2 | | 0.10 |
| | F | | 21.27** |

Note. $N = 772$; VC = Victim Consciousness; IV = Ingroup Victimization. Model 1 and Model 2 include Standardized Betas.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .001$.

Table 4

Hierarchical regression analysis of victim consciousness on support for feminist group.

| Variables | | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| Step 1: Control variables | Family/Friend Membership | 0.09** | 0.05 |
| | R^2 | 0.003 | |
| | F | 1.54 | |
| Step 2: Main effects | Centrality of IV | | 0.25** |
| | Inclusive VC | | 0.23* |
| | Exclusive VC | | 0.15 |
| | R^2 | | 0.12 |
| | F | | 7.03** |

Note. $N = 353$; VC = Victim Consciousness; IV = Ingroup Victimization. Model 1 and Model 2 include Standardized Betas.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .001$.

parties, nor did they share a similar historical background in terms of victimization. They were formed according to different identity dimensions—immigrants, religious minorities, individuals experiencing homelessness, and so on. Basically, we found that inclusive victim consciousness did not predict support towards other victimized minority groups in any of the groups except *feminists*, whereas personal centrality of ingroup victimization did, regardless of the three identification groups within the study—*feminists*, *egalitarians*, and *nonfeminists*.

Our findings contribute to the growing body of literature on positive relations between different victimized minority groups within a specific society (Craig et al., 2012; Craig & Richeson, 2014; Glasford & Calcagno, 2012; Mikołajczak et al., 2022; Uysal et al., 2022; Vollhardt et al., 2016). We proved that identification with a certain minority group fosters positive attitudes towards other minority groups that are formed according to different identity dimensions (i.e., ethnic, social). Our first hypothesis was that *feminists* would support disadvantaged outgroups more than their *egalitarian* and *nonfeminist* counterparts. What we found supported this idea, since women who identified explicitly as *feminists* showed the highest levels of support towards other groups. Self-labeled *feminists* are perhaps more willing to support various disadvantaged groups since they are more committed to undertaking activist behavior on behalf of women, who are another disadvantaged group. Indeed, feminist movements are characterized by ‘shared struggle, common connection with other women and the pursuit and implementation of collective solutions to communal problems’ (Adamson et al., 2016, p. 2).

On the other hand, *feminists* may be more conscious of, or more sensitive to, injustice, simply because of their identity formation. According to Becker and Wagner (2009) gender identity model, the strength of identification with gender and the content of gender identity—traditional or progressive—should be addressed simultaneously rather than being regarded as interchangeable. Based on their model, an activist is defined as someone who identifies strongly with women as a group, and who has a progressive identity content at the same time. Indeed, women who identify strongly with their gender ingroup but not with traditional gender content are more willing to support feminist ideology and engage in advocacy on behalf of women (Burn et al., 2000), while identification with *feminists* increases involvement in collective action (Liss et al., 2004; Nelson et al., 2008; Yoder et al., 2011).

In the same manner, van Breen et al. (2017) reported a multiple identity approach to the feminist social movement: It is identification with *feminists*, not only with gender but also correlates with attitudes towards the group’s position in society. They noted that those who identify strongly with *feminists* are more likely to support both moderate and radical collective action strategies, while, on the other hand, identification with women did not predict support for collective action. Stürmer and Simon (2004) reported that, when compared to simply identifying with a disadvantaged group (in the present study: women),

identification with a social movement organization (in the present study: feminist ideology) may be a better predictor of collective action. However, feminist identity is related to lower levels of social dominance orientation, modern sexism, meritocracy, and just world beliefs (Fitz et al., 2012; Worthen, 2012), which contradict equality. Furthermore, we asked about support for various disadvantaged outgroups, including LGBTQ+ individuals. Recent empirical research has indicated that those who strongly identify as feminists hold more positive attitudes towards trans people and sexual minorities (Fitz et al., 2012; Worthen, 2012).

Egalitarians, on the other hand, ranked second in terms of support for other minority groups, according to our analysis. Although research has shown that egalitarians are similar to feminists in terms of their support for gender equality (Roy et al., 2007) and have similar levels of feminist consciousness as feminists (Zucker, 2004), they are not activists in the way that feminists are. Here, it is obvious that having a similar mindset as feminists is an asset in terms of supporting other groups, although egalitarians ranked higher than nonfeminists in this regard, egalitarians reported lower levels of support for outgroups when compared to feminists in the present study. In other words, endorsement of feminist attitudes without explicitly identifying with the group seems not to motivate women to undertake collective action on behalf of any group. In line with social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), women who self-identify as feminists are more willing to work towards implementing social change collectively and more willing to engage in collective action (Eisele & Stake, 2008; Moradi et al., 2012; Nelson et al., 2008). Indeed, research supports the idea that women are less likely to engage in collective action on behalf of women's issues if they reject a feminist identity (Yoder et al., 2011; Zucker & Bay-Cheng, 2010).

Furthermore, by supporting gender equality but not taking action to change the status of the ingroup, egalitarians may use social mobility Pely to change their own status (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In other words, holding a similar mindset to feminists ensures individual gain for egalitarians. In fact, in terms of Becker and Wagner's (2009) gender identity model, egalitarians would belong to the progressive nonidentifier category of those who have progressive gender role attitudes (similar to feminists) but do not identify strongly with their gender (the ingroup). Thus, it is not surprising that egalitarians are less active on behalf of either their own group or other groups than feminists, who strongly identify with the ingroup as well.

Another reason why feminists are more sensitive towards the problems of other minority (out)groups may be their personal experiences that stem from their membership of a stigmatized group (Vollhardt et al., 2016). Women who identify exclusively as feminists face several negative cultural stereotypes and are more discriminated against. They are labeled as angry, man-hating, unattractive, and lesbian (see Anderson & Brassel, 2017; Edley & Wetherell, 2001). As a result, feminists may be far more sensitive to collective suffering, oppression, or inequality, and may perceive these as being more personally relevant than do nonfeminists. Such cognitive relevance can work as a motivator of support towards victimized outgroups. Furthermore, research has shown that anxiety-provoking cognitions motivate prosocial behavior as a coping strategy (Raposa et al., 2016). Therefore, among feminists, support for other minority groups may function as a tool for coping with distress caused by discrimination and stigmatization.

Our second hypothesis concerned the relationship between victim consciousness and support towards victimized outgroups in Hungary. Although centrality of ingroup victimization significantly predicted support towards other minority groups in the case of all groups—feminists, egalitarians, and nonfeminists—inclusive victim consciousness significantly predicted support towards other minority groups only in the case of feminists. Furthermore, contrary to our expectations, our analyses showed that centrality of ingroup victimization is a greater predictor than inclusive victim consciousness in terms of providing support. This pattern suggests that inclusive victim consciousness may not always play the stronger role in terms of intergroup solidarity. However, our finding that inclusive victim consciousness

predicted support towards victimized outgroups contributes to the growing literature that argues that the modern feminist movement is becoming more intersectional and more inclusive in terms of action against the inequalities affecting various groups (Brassel & Anderson, 2020; Cole, 2009). When considering feminists, it is not surprising to find centrality of ingroup victimization as a stronger predictor, since it fundamentally concerns the personal importance of the ingroup's victimization, and since feminists perceive gender inequality as being more personally important compared to their counterparts (Zucker, 2004).

In conclusion, most of the research carried out on the specific issue addressed by the present study has focused on relations between minority and majority group members, or the group members of different minorities that shared a similar background. However, the emergence of minority-to-minority relations formed with respect to different identity dimensions, without the formation of a common identity, is inevitable and is equally important for understanding solidarity among different unprivileged groups. Our findings suggest that personal perceptions of victimization may increase the level of solidarity between different minority groups.

5. Limitations and future directions

The present research is subject to several limitations. First, since it was correlational, the effects of collective victimhood beliefs could not be tested. In order to explore the possible causal relations, experimental designs would need to be provided. Another obvious limitation of the present study is that our outcome measure utilized single-item measures. While the use of extensive sampling provides greater confidence, future work in this area should use more robust measures and various outcome variables. Furthermore, we used exclusively online self-reporting measures, which made it harder to control reliability. Our single item question that was used for the outcome measure needs to be handled cautiously because liking a post on social media might be a quite different experience than physical or verbal action on behalf of outgroup members. In this sense behavioral measures might be used and different types of self-reported support (as we used in our study) might be compared in order to ascertain whether or not these findings can be generalized.

On the other hand, our single-axis categorization of feminist, egalitarian, and nonfeminist groups are very traditional in the sense of explaining disparities among subordinate groups. Our sample mostly consisted of women who were highly educated and had a medium income. A possible variety among individuals with different educational backgrounds and incomes would be an asset before making any final inferences. Lastly, generalizability is questionable, as we only invited outgroups that live in Hungary or that have an association with Hungarians. Future research in this field should include measures related to other outgroups in other societies in order to generalize the results by comparison.

6. Conclusions

This study presents and provides initial insights into victim consciousness among women who self-identify as feminists; endorse feminist attitudes but do not identify with feminism; and neither endorse feminist attitudes nor identify with feminism. We have therefore contributed to the literature on solidarity towards various minority outgroups and found that it is necessary not only to identify with a disadvantaged group (women), but also to identify with a political group (feminists) in order to take action on behalf of outgroups. In addition, self-identified feminists reported higher levels of support towards other minority groups, and inclusive consciousness was a significant predictor of support in the case of this group only. Taken together, the findings of this study suggest that although endorsement of the core ideas of feminism is essential, accepting the label 'feminist' provides higher

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